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LETTERS
ON THE SUBJECT OF
THE EARL OF SELKIRK'S
PAMPHLET
ON
HIGHLAND EMIGRATION:

AS THEY LATELY APPEARED UNDER THE SIGNATURE OF
AMICUS IN ONE OF THE EDINBURGH NEWSPAPERS.

SECOND EDITION,
WITH SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR JOHN ANDERSON;
AND LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, LONDON.

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TO THE SECOND EDITION.

(*By the Author.*)

THE Eight Letters published in January and February last, under the signature of *Amicus*, were written by an individual who has no title to the honourable appellation of a *Highlander*, and were composed under circumstances of considerable disadvantage in point of local knowledge. Their appearance, therefore, required, and was accompanied with, an apology. The fact is, they were dictated by feelings of disappointment and regret ; disappointment, that many months should elapse without the appearance of an answer to Lord Selkirk's pamphlet ; and regret, that the delay of such answer seemed,

seemed, with the public at large, to afford demonstration of the impossibility of any sufficient reply. Convinced that this last impression was hostile to the interests of his country, and confirmed in his early suspicions of the accuracy of Lord Selkirk's reasonings, by the information gained in conversations with some gentlemen of equally undoubted veracity and information, the author of these letters was prevailed on to give vent to feelings which were sincere ; and to opinions which, at the least, had this advantage, that while, on the one hand, they were unbiassed by the prejudices of local attachment, or the partialities of hereditary impression, so, on the other, they were uninfluenced by any interests of transatlantic speculation.

The letters were very rapidly composed, and were immediately offered to the editor of a newspaper, through the medium of a third party. Their object was purely what it was professed to be ; the hope of exciting
more

more valuable exertions in the same track ; the expectation of provoking more able and better informed antagonists to meet the Right Honourable Champion of Emigration on his own ground. It was the prospect of leading the public into the paths of inquiry before they entered those of affirmation ; the hope of prevailing on Britons to scan the merits of a mighty plan of national improvement, before they put the final seal of approbation either to its principles or to its practical execution. Farther than this, the author had not one view. He gave to these papers their chance of succeeding. They were meant to rouse, but not to inflame, to awaken opposition, but not to scatter abuse.

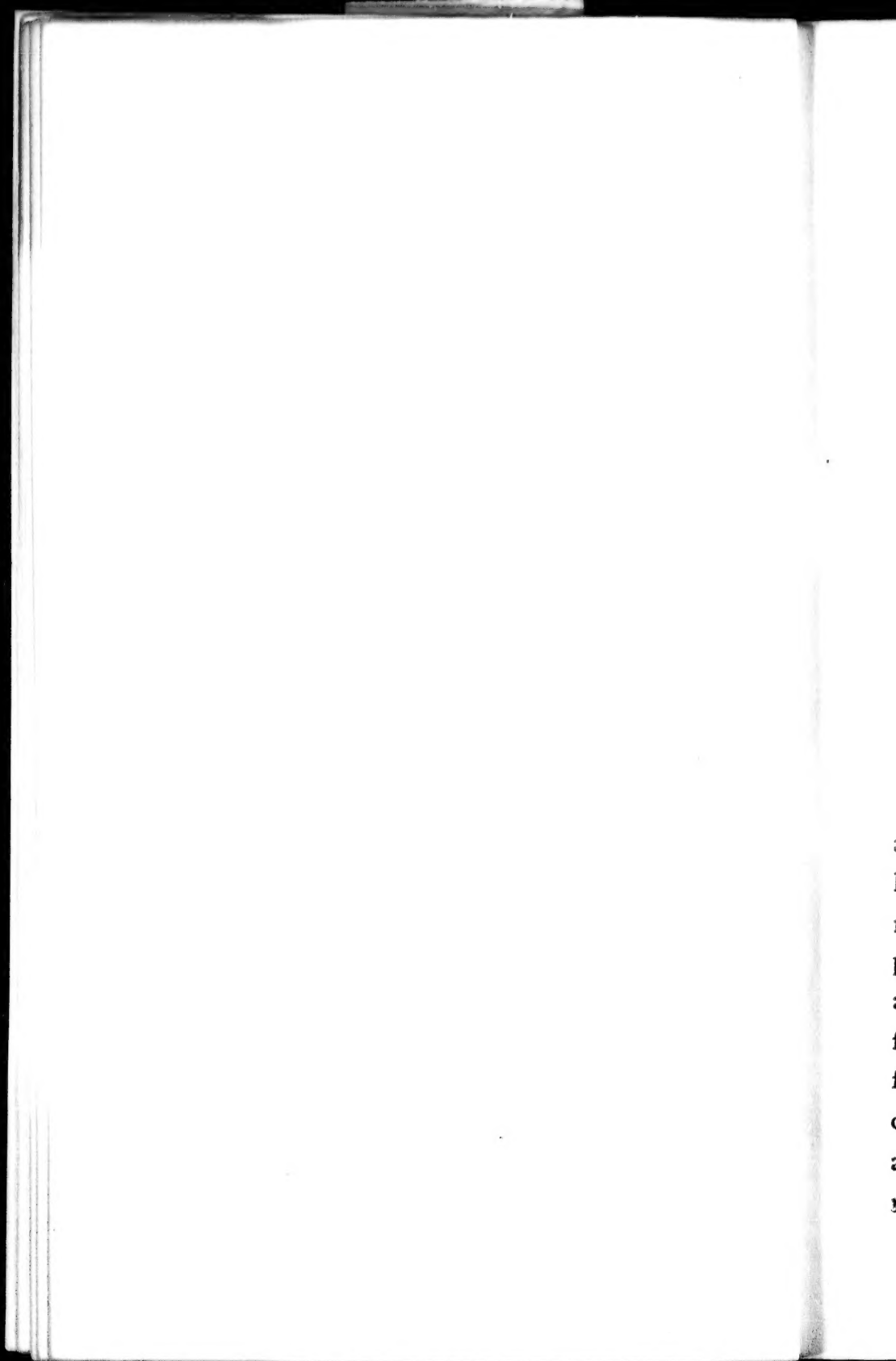
The subsequent publication of the letters, in the connected form of a pamphlet, was the voluntary act of a respectable bookseller. It was determined on, unknown to the author ; and, although it was not carried through without his interference, (to revise the proof sheets)

sheets) no claim of authorship was either pretended or avowed. And here it was supposed that the *Letters of Amicus* would rest. It has happened, however, that matters have so far taken a new turn, that the publisher has intimated that a second edition is called for by the public ; an honourable suffrage in favour of the sentiments these letters expose, and to which it is impossible to be insensible. At the same time, it is certain that if the author had foreseen that his brief correspondence in a newspaper would so repeatedly have come forth, the contents of that correspondence should originally have appeared in a more extended, if not in a more perfect, form. This, however, it is now too late to rectify ; and the author, while he is gratified to find that considerable opposition to the admiration of Highland emigration has sprung up, cannot but lament that the publication in which that opposition was first avowed, should not have been more worthy of the object it would serve.

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To supply its deficiencies in some small degree, he has ventured to annex to this edition, certain SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS, which have occurred in the course of a reconsideration of Lord Selkirk's book, and on perusal of a late valuable publication by Mr BROWN, Sheriff-substitute of Invernessshire, a publication containing *facts* which it will not be easy to answer. These Additional Remarks are now offered to the consideration of the public, with all the diffidence and respect that is due from an individual to the community, but with all the conviction of their importance, which scrupulous investigation and temperate inquiry can warrant.

EDINBURGH, }
10th May 1806. }



HIGHLAND EMIGRATION.

LETTER I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD & CHRONICLE.

SIR,

HAVING within these few days perused a pamphlet, which the Earl of Selkirk has lately published, on the subject of emigration, and to which my curiosity was excited, partly by its extensive popularity, and partly by that splendid encomium which an article in a noted periodical work exhibits, I have found so much disappointment in the result of a careful perusal of the book, and, amidst many things to commend, have seen so much to disapprove, that I am disposed, with your permission, to submit the opinion of an individual, on some parts of this celebrated

ed pamphlet, to the consideration of your readers in general.

In so doing I should wish not to be misunderstood. I have no personal object to serve. I have no Highland tenantry to lose ; no property dependant either on the waste or increase of Highland population. I have no knowledge of Lord Selkirk, but the general report of the goodness of his heart, and no impressions of his intelligence, but the conviction that it is considerable. But I suspect that, with all this soundness of heart, and all this extent of talent, his late work is little else than the fruit of an inconsiderate and juvenile enthusiasm, grounded on certain mistaken principles, and fraught with very dangerous consequences.

That his Lordship's book is popular, is no ways surprising. The eloquence of its diction, the modesty of its execution, the interesting tendency of its subject, the enthusiasm which it both breathes and inspires, the active zeal of so elevated and so young a man, the almost romantic story of the settlement of his infant colony, are all calculated to excite lively emotions of admiration.—At a time when the struggles of the Empire to advance her own greatness, and to curb the criminal ambition of another power, demands the patriotism of every class ; in an age when those demands do, nevertheless, not always find a sympathetic

sympathetic obedience from the younger men of the higher ranks ; in such times, to discover such talents, and such activity, in such a man as Lord Selkirk, naturally draws forth neither very ordinary, nor very limited applause.

Nor is it wonderful that professional reviewers should join in this applause. With them, popularity is the prime motive both of opinion and of conduct. To suit the public taste is their great and obvious object, not only in the selection of the books they characterise, but in the tenor of their individual reports. In the present instance, besides, it is more than suspected, that the author of the warmest panygeric which the reviews have furnished, was an early and zealous friend of the Earl's, whose attachment to the man may have overmatched the justice of the critic, and whose predisposition for opinions may have led him somewhat hastily to presume the rectitude of their application.

To the writer of this letter, the praises which have been so profusely lavished on the pamphlet of this Noble Lord, appear to be matter of some regret. So long as the peasantry of any country is essential to its well-being, so long as this island has within its bounds one unproductive acre capable of improvement, as long must any book, of which the tendency goes to
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represents the exertions either of Government or of individuals to restrain emigration, occasion public danger. It were a doctrine too wild for the warmest admirer of the Noble Earl to maintain that the prosperity of a country is only in proportion to its *want* of population; it were a position too adventurous for all his admirers together, to insist that Scotland has arrived at that consummation of improvement which supercedes the necessity of future exertions. And yet the tendency of the Noble Earl's observations,—and, what may perhaps be sooner obvious to mankind in general—the tendency of his example, strikes some individuals as directly calculated for the recommendation of a system, of all others in theory the most wild, and in practice the most mischievous.

The great and leading outset doctrines of the Noble Lord are (perhaps unhappily) founded in indisputable truths. The primary foundation of his argument is, in some measure, incontrovertible; and to men who do not think very deeply on any subject; to those who are caught by the music and the tinsel of diction; to those who yield to the simplicity of a plausible deduction, or the fascination of merely present good intentions; over and above the ample herd of those who believe any thing they see in a printed book, especially when ushered into notice by the sanction

tion of a great name; to all such men, the effects of a publication, such as Lord Selkirk's, must be conviction. No man who knows any thing of the state of society in the Highlands of Scotland, is ignorant of those leading facts which the Earl of Selkirk has, nevertheless, filled many a page to tell. Every Scotman, and almost every educated Briton, is aware that the gradual abolition of the feudal system, and the measures consequent on the rebellions 1715 and 1745, changed the measures of the chieftains, and altered the manners of their people. By the determined introduction, and the vigorous execution of her laws, Government transferred the weapons of authority from individuals to the State. The decay of the desire soon followed the extirpation of the means, of Clanish hostility; and of consequence, the occasion for a warlike tenantry, died away with the outrageous opportunities and the ferocious dispositions of the landlords. Men who were retained, not to till the ground, but to fight the quarrels or increase the magnificence of their masters, were useless encumbrances to these masters, when the battle and parade were no more—men who had lost the spear, but who had not yet got the ploughshare in its place, became of necessity idle. It is always easier to disarm than to employ; to forbid one system than to intro-

duce another. The prohibitions which followed the victory of Culloden were therefore speedily enforced, but the revolution of feelings long acquired, and of dispositions inherited through a succession of ages, required patience, and a gradual advance. The landlords were, however, compelled to resign *their* power, and this at once destroyed the reciprocity of obligation with their people. For as the master lost his use for the vassal, so the vassal, of consequence, lost his claims for support from his chief.—A great body of men thus became apparently supernumerary, and, as it were, a drag on the hands of chieftains now unable, and perhaps unwilling, to attempt the conversion of a numerous band to habits foreign to their natures, difficult in the peculiar state of the country, and impossible without great expence. Hence at first arose that necessity, and those discontents which drove the Highlanders to look to other countries for those blessings, (as they conceived them), which the own land no longer gave; and hence that apathy with which their masters, for a time, permitted the superfluous tenantry to depart. The vanity of numbers was easily overcome by the profits of a temporary reduction, and even the love of power retired before the prospects of immediate emolument.

Lord

Lord Selkirk is right, therefore, when he observes, that a change of policy accompanied a change of manners; and that the operation of the two having thrown loose a great body of people, that body was necessitated to seek the employment abroad, of which they no longer saw the prospect at home.

Sir,—I shall, if your permit me, resume this subject in your next number.—I am, &c.

AMICUS.

LETTER II.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.

SIR,

IN my last I observed that Lord Selkirk was correct in so far as he remarked, that, when a numerous body of men were turned adrift by a revolution, both in manners and policy, these men were naturally obliged to seek that protection abroad, of which they were for the time deprived at home. A train of bold and hungry followers, no longer suffered by law to fight

fight for their bread, not yet enabled, in the condition of their country, to procure that bread by other means, and incapable, from their nature, to subsist without it, must be employed elsewhere. The new system came upon this people very unprepared for its reception, and but little disposed to make the experiment. Besides,—transformed into corn farmers at once, they could not be; they wanted skill; they wanted capital; they wanted a country adapted to the necessities of an immediate and expensive change. Converted into sheep farmers, they could as little be; for in addition to the other objections, their numbers presented an insurmountable bar to that plan. Still, however, many of them struggled for a while to resist the innovation; in some instances preferring mistaken claims of right; in others, appealing to prejudices not yet quite subdued, and to feelings which even a change of education could not at once totally obliterate. But the struggle of erroneous possession is ever vain; the combat of feeling against profit is generally fruitless. The majority of the people soon found they could be spared; and the doom of the Highland revolution, 1745, was now indeed heard and felt by the inhabitants. It is true, the operation of this awful sentence did not take place to its full extent in a moment;

moment ; but it commenced, and it has been in progress ever since.

In all this radical detail I agree with the Earl of Selkirk. In all this, I should suppose that neither his Lordship nor myself can find an opponent ; for the facts are of universal admission and notoriety. But farther I cannot accord with his Lordship. I acknowledge that the overthrow of feudal manners produced, on the pressure of the instant, a superabundant local population, and that such superabundance, not being directed into new channels of *domestic* uses, were of necessity driven to seek the means of existence elsewhere ; but I can hardly admit the justice of any one other position in Lord Selkirk's book. Indeed, Sir, I must unequivocally oppose the remainder of this book, in respect of its general tendency, and also in respect of the particular grounds by which that tendency is manifested. Of the first, I complain, because it is calculated not merely to extenuate, but to encourage emigration. With the latter, I am dissatisfied, because I suspect their accuracy. But were the materials unobjectionable, I cannot, as a friend to the country which contains me, but condemn a work of which the scope of ten out of twelve chapters is directly calculated to remove those apprehensions, which either the most discontented or the most sanguine

Highlander,

Highlander, must entertain (but for such assurances) against so vast an adventure as emigration. Domestic dissatisfaction is a cheerless and dangerous sentiment; and yet, can there be a keener edge laid to the root of domestic peace, than those glowing pictures of independence, security, congenial society, and every blessing a Highlander has been taught to prize, which the Earl of Selkirk has penciled under the term *Emigration*. Does he not turn to the peasant and say, "Leave your country; leave a land which has no longer use for you; a land where you may have bread indeed, but where you can only earn that bread by the direction of every habit which could sweeten the morsel. Emigrate therefore; and if you will but turn towards the colony which I protect, and clear a few acres of its forests, you will become affluent and happy beyond the condition of all your fathers." And does he not look towards the Legislature and plead—"Encourage emigration—drain off your superfluous people—depopulate your mountains, and send your hardiest sons to foreign climes, there to seek that happiness and protection which the land of their fathers denied them; there to become the sure and steady friends of the country which turned them from her bosom."—Such, I contend, is the true import of the Noble Earl's advice; and if the particulars of its
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detail are embellished with the persuasives both of precept and example, still the object of all this is nothing else than to render his favourite emigration more palatable to the people, and less odious to the government.

In this spirit of well meant, but to my mind mistaken enthusiasm, I see nothing to commend. As we are a nation, in these precarious times, of soldiers—as we are a nation, at all times, of mariners—as we are also an agricultural and a mercantile people—in all these characters, is it possible to deny the importance of an abundant population? I would not, in the present condition of Europe, speak the language of despondency; but, as a lover of my country, I cannot but advise the champions of emigration to look well to the ranks of our armies, and the demands of our navy; to regard the state of wages of domestic labour, and the calls of our manufacturers, mechanics, and farmers, before they proceed farther in their experimental schemes of depopulation; I would have them regard the thousands of waste acres in our own land before they thus struggle to drain the scanty population it possesses; and I would earnestly remind them that, until the days of Lord Selkirk, the doctrine of most philosophers was, that the life's blood of this nation

nation was her inhabitants—her peasantry—nay, Sir, I will add (without meaning offence to any class of subjects) her Highlanders. William Pitt's illustrious father told the nation, and the nation's representatives, that he “ fought for merit, and he found it in the mountains of the north ;” and an author, at whom though it is the fashion of modern reviewers sometimes to sneer, still whose fame will not perish while the affections of the heart, and the love of morals endure, in rebuking the supineness, as well as the errors which thirty years ago prevailed on the subject of emigration, observes, that “ to hinder insurrection by driving away the people, and to govern peaceably by having no subjects, argues no great profundity of politics. To soften the obdurate, to convince the mistaken, to mollify the resentful, are worthy of a statesman ; but it affords a legislator little self-applause to consider that where there was formerly an insurrection, there is now a desert.”*

Sir, perhaps it may be said, that Lord Selkirk's book does not recommend to drain the country of its people ; that he only seeks to conduct those who are pre-resolved to travel, into an asylum good for themselves, and beneficial to their native country ; but a fair examination of his Lordship's pamphlet, of which

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* Vide Johnson's Tour.

I shall offer something more in my next, will, I believe, correct the impression.

AMICUS.

LETTER III.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.

SIR,

I HAVE asserted, that a fair examination of Lord Selkirk's pamphlet will demonstrate the mistake of supposing that his arguments are confined to those individuals whose peculiar tempers or views would have led them to migrate at all events. His Lordship's 3d section, which is the basis of all his reasonings, (historical facts excepted) begins with representing the soil and climate—nature herself—as opposed “to the extension of Highland tillage;” that is to say, as in opposition to the very possibility of employing the people at home in those labours, which the Noble Lord is at great pains, in other places, to shew,

shew, are best adapted to a Highlander's feelings and nature. This, as an abstract and fundamental proposition, I deny. Granting that the mountains, properly so termed, are chiefly fitted for pasturage, we know that there are still uncultivated tracts, both vast and numerous, of which the soil is equal to every ordinary agricultural purpose; and as to the climate of these regions, though moist in some places, it is altogether erroneous to suppose it inferior to a great portion of the cultivated districts of Scotland. Whoever will go to the Highlands, unprejudiced by *opinions previously formed, and indisposed to reject all information which does not harmonize with those opinions*, will find, that wherever the improved system of husbandry has been even partially introduced, there has been found no impossibility of improvement, no superabundance of people, no love of emigration, and no want of good land to cultivate. Sir, I am well assured of these facts; and if any man doubts them, let him first impartially inquire, and then determine between Lord Selkirk and me. With such information, I cannot acknowledge that the Highlander is driven across the Atlantic by a defective soil, or a disastrous climate. Indeed, the Noble Lord has himself been aware of the inadequacy of these causes of emigration, and, accordingly, he studiously couples

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them with two other supposed barriers to Highland prosperity, the scarcity of fuel, and the characteristic indolence of the people. In these last sources of Caledonian misery, the author is much about as unfortunate as in their antecedents. Even in the eye of manufacturing industry, the scarcity of fuel in these districts presents no real obstacle; and the supposed difficulties from national character are surmounted, almost as soon as they are created, by the Earl himself. That the Highlander may not have a coal-pit open at his cottage door, is true; but has he not a navigable sea all around him, and did Lord Selkirk never hear of imported fuel? How many of the European manufactories are served with sea-borne coal; nay, how many of the busiest and wealthiest towns in Scotland (*all*, I believe, to the north of Dundee) are thus accommodated, and yet thrive?—The scarcity of fuel, therefore, without placing any dependence on the almost universal facility of obtaining peat, would seem to be an affected and factitious objection against the introduction of a commercial and mechanical industry in the Highlands of Scotland.

But to this it has been superadded, that the temper of the people is adverse to exertion, at least at home. Now, Sir, let us consider but for a moment;—the man who has not been taught to work, and the man to whom employment

employment has never been furnished, must be ostensibly indolent. The spirit of industry must be ever dormant, until it is awakened by the opportunity of exertion; and thus the Highlander, while bereft of the means of employment, must appear as idle, as a Lowlander would appear in similar circumstances: yet such is not his native genius. Thousands of testimonies prove this. At this moment, I know that public works are carrying on in different counties by natives of Inverness and Ross-shire, who are employed for the very reason, that they are better labourers than the people of these counties.—View them also as soldiers and as seamen, and then decry their capabilities if you can. It is needless, however, to pursue this inquiry, for I can produce the evidence of the Noble Lord against himself. He has told you, that the Highlander, inactive and indolent on his own shore, is no sooner transplanted to his Lordship's colony, than he becomes active and energetic, an industrious husbandman, and a promising warrior. The constitution of the man undergoes, it seems, a total revolution by the mere act of emigration, and the very hereditary vices of his nature are, by this single step, transformed into their opposite virtues.

The inconsistency of these statements is manifest and striking. It can only be the result of an enthusiasm,

fiasm, which is just the more dangerous in proportion to the general liberality and excellence of the mind on which it has fastened itself. Sir, I should lament to hear it argued, even in the sportive display of controversial skill, that the stifled and feverish air of an American fen was requisite for the preservation of that spirit which once dignified the sons of Morven. Far more must I lament to find it seriously upheld, and by so elevated an adviser, that the heroism of character, which once distinguished our countrymen, has fallen so low, that to preserve the Highland name from utter contemptibility, we must transplant her people to a distant—an American clime. Happily for our country, we believe the opinion to be erroneous; and not less happily, we are persuaded that in general the remedy will be esteemed as much worse than the disease. If the temper and character of the Highland peasantry has indeed degenerated, it is trusted that the general disposition will turn towards the trial of a domestic cure. At this crisis, when men, in numbers beyond example, are wanted to defend our island from the attacks of a man who would have no objection to annex even the Highlands of Scotland, with all their imperfections “of soil and climate,” to his own overgrown possessions, we can scarcely resolve which most to condemn, the enthusiasm which would invite, or

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the argument that would exculpate an active spirit of British emigration.

On these grounds, I beg leave to resist Lord Selkirk's whole positions rested on the ideas of soil, and climate, and national character. They are suspicious in accuracy, and are dangerous in experiment. Neither can I yield to the wild and unaccountable notion, that banishment from our native land, and all the scenes of infancy, is in any way calculated to call forth the hidden virtues of the human character. One word more on this head only.

The Noble Earl has argued, that any change of scene to a Highlander, is emigration; that to remove him across the Clyde is tantamount to removal across the Western Ocean; that Glasgow and Paisley are to him as foreign as the shores of Labrador, or St John's; that to be happy, he must have land; and that to have land, he must be an emigrant. On the justice of some of these opinions, I shall probably hereafter remark; at present, I would only request of Lord Selkirk and his admirers, generally to ask themselves these questions;—Granting that the Highland climate is boisterous, Is it not at least nearer to that of "Glasgow and Paisley," than the climate of the Back Settlements of North America; admitting that the manners of Lanark or Renfrew may at first surprise a native

tive of Argyle or Inverness, are those manners more difficult for a Scotchman to imbibe, than the customs which pervade the banks of the Mississippi or the Oronooko; above all, granting that change of place of any kind is emigration, which of the two is the better for the Patriot to recommend, that movement from county to county, whereby the Nation loses not one man; or the passage from clime to clime, which, in all human probability, separates the subject from the parent State for ever?

AMICUS.

LETTER IV.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.

SIR,

IT is a prominent feature in Lord Selkirk's book, the consideration and state of that valuable supply of *soldiers* which his Lordship owns that the public, for a long while, derived from the Highlands, but which

as he conceives, is now at an end. Satisfied that this is "one of the chief political evils of emigration," it is singular that the Noble Lord should ever have propagated a single opinion, far less should have adopted a course of measures, which were susceptible of a construction favourable to so fatal a spirit. Fortunately, however, neither his arguments nor his example have yet extinguished this nursery of national protectors. I am credibly informed, that since the bill which the Legislature lately and wisely passed, at the instigation of the Highland Society, nearly four thousand Highlanders have entered into the army; and as one remarkable instance of the existing spirit of these people, and of the still existing nursery which their country contains, it may be mentioned, that Colonel Cameron of the 79th regiment, lately raised 800 men in six months, for his second battalion, without himself possessing one single foot of Highland territory. This success could not be the effect of those "low rents, and that feudal influence," to which alone Lord Selkirk would ascribe such things; the days of *these* operating causes have nearly passed away. And let us only contrast the fact I have mentioned, with another fact which Lord Selkirk cannot but know; his own success in the recruiting for emigrants. He too, raised about 800 people; but his
troops

troops were composed of a motley assemblage of ages and sexes. Even these, I am informed, he raised with infinite labour and difficulty ; travelling from market to market, supporting hired recruiters, aided by eloquent harangues, and holding out splendid promises, and enchanting prospects. Won by these means, about 800 people were enticed to visit an expected land of ease and plenty, and to desert the scenes of their youth. The Highlander is not naturally credulous ; but amidst a whole mass of people, there always will be some who are not proof against golden dreams, nor such temptations as the Earl of Selkirk's personal attendance in the journey in pursuit of promised affluence. Yet, with all these allurements, his Lordship's recruiting came but slowly on, while every common regimental serjeant around him, with no other seduction but "*King and Country*," out-did the eloquence, and overpowered the largesses of the Earl and all his supporters.

Sir, I have perfect assurances that this is the fact, and I have pride in announcing it to my country. Still then I must maintain, that the Scottish Highlands are yet a nursery for soldiers, and will continue so, unless the friends of colonization should ever unhappily succeed in desolating its shores. The men who fought our battles in Egypt, in the 42d, 91st, and 92d regiments, were Highlanders ; raised long after feudal

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fluence was in its wane. The men who vanquished Tippoo, who followed General Baird to the breach at Seringapatam, were mostly persons of the same description ; and many of our best filled regiments at this moment, who possibly may soon be called to fight our battles on our own ground, are those very Highlanders, whose brethren it has cost Lord Selkirk so many pounds, and so much trouble, to send off to fell wood, and drain swamps in Prince Edward's Island.

It has been observed by the Noble Earl, that in proportion as the feudal system has been supplanted by commerce, the Highland regiments have "approached" to a similarity with others in the service. Depend upon it, Sir, no officer will say so. If, indeed, the Earl only means to state, that in those regiments where the native Highlanders are mixed with Lowland recruits, there, the especial character of the former will be less conspicuous *in the corps*, than in regiments purely Highland, the assertion is very safe. But if it is meant to be conveyed, that in the regiments wholly Highland-born, the characteristic features of their birth have changed, then do I deny the statement, and put the fact to the judgment and experience of every officer in the service.

Be assured, Sir, that the precise Highland character of many regiments, will be found as distinctly marked in 1806, as it was in 1756. The causes are
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not justly to be sought in the progress and increase of commerce ; they are to be found in the climate, in the constitution, and in blood.—It is a total mistake to suppose, that commercial prosperity destroys the heroism of national character. The history of the world, and the uniform conduct of our own Lowland, English, and Irish troops, refutes the idea. To discover the source of the peculiar gallantry and hardihood of the Highland corps, you must turn to the country which produced them—to its mountains and its rugged shores. In these natural causes, conjoined with the effects of a free government, you will find the true and the still existing means of preserving that nursery for your soldiers, which I am apprehensive the forest lands of North America are little calculated to improve.

The Noble Lord desires his readers to look back to the Seven Years War, in order to view Highland regiments in their purity. This, Sir, in one sense, is but a paltry compliment to their successors. I suspect, however, that the Earl here alludes to one thing, and the generality of his readers look to another ; that it is not the character of the soldier, but the mode of recruiting him, to which his Lordship refers. If this suspicion is accurate, the difficulty is unriddled at once. We are as far from maintaining, that the landlords, in general, have now the same influence which

which they possessed fifty years ago, in directing their people to follow them, as we are from admitting, that the constitutional powers of the foldier have declined with the aristocracy of the Chieftain.

The importance of a Highland peasantry, as a nursery for foldiers, and for mariners, too, is not denied by the Noble Earl himself. Unless, therefore, it could be proved, that the country, at this moment, has a superfluity of both descriptions of men, I should imagine that there would be more genuine patriotism in conducting the unemployed population of the Highlands (if such there be) to the immediate service of the State, than to transatlantic speculations. It is said, however, that the emigrant is not the description of person who would enlist. We reply, Try them. We believe indeed, that the trial has been frequently made, and successfully made, on the very eve of embarkation. Take but half the pains, and less than half the sums which Lord Selkirk has expended in teaching the advantages of his American establishment, to instruct the Highlander that his country wants himself, and will protect his family, and depend on it you will keep him. Some restless and dissatisfied spirits will no doubt always form an exception to general conduct. But of these I speak not. At all events, why not make the attempt? Is money and labour only rationally employed

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ed in the service of emigration? Ships you may build,
and temples you may restore ; but

“ A bold peasantry, their country's pride,

“ When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

Emigration, says Lord Selkirk, is, at any rate, connected with “ national prosperity,” in respect both to agriculture and manufactures ; and this position he raises on the history of our sister kingdom, during the æra of the House of Tudor. That during the reigns of Henry the Seventh, and his successor, the power of the greater English Barons was broken ; that in consequence, their retainers were set loose upon the instant, and obliged to move ; and that, historically speaking, England has been a flourishing country ever since, I am no ways disposed to contradict. But it does not follow, that the emigration of those days was the cause of the subsequent prosperity of the nation. This emigration was the *effect* of a sudden revolution, and not the cause of any internal national advantage. It is incorrect to confound the partial result of a peculiar and temporary innovation, with the establishment of a general principle of political economy ; which principle, if it existed at all, must go to this
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enormous length, that national prosperity is ever in proportion to the extension and activity of the spirit of emigration. I am, &c. *AMICUS.*

LETTER V.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.

SIR,

IN recommending emigration as advantageous to manufactures and agriculture, Lord Selkirk begins with assuring us that those who emigrate are not of the description of "industrious workmen." Granted: *They* are no more to be reckoned industrious workmen, who have not been instructed, and are not employed, than they are to be esteemed American farmers who have never crossed the ocean. But the question ought to be, are these men incapable of being made industrious workmen? For resolving that point the Noble Earl, as usual, himself aids us. He freely
admits

admits that they are capable of all the adequate exertion how soon they are removed from their native homes ; and surely it is an undeniable and necessary consequence of this admission that the same fitness would appear at home, were the opportunity of its exercise only presented. In fact it is the cultivation of the earth, we are assured, that is the great bent of their natures and inclinations ; and of course, unless they are born to be fit for nothing, in any situation, they must be capable at home as well as abroad for all adequate exertions in this great tendency of their original and hereditary dispositions. Thus one difficulty is surmounted. It is true, there remains another ; for the capability of the labourer is useless, unless there are opportunities for its display. Availing himself of this proposition, the Noble Earl is anxious to represent the Highland districts as absolutely unfit for any purposes but those of pasturage. He would proscribe Highland cultivation as unprofitable to the subject, and as baneful to the state. Nay, Sir, he would even advise a diminution of that wretched portion of tillage land, which, in these regions, at present cheers the dismal expanse of otherways uninterrupted waste. With deference to his Lordship, this is a little too much. Those who know the Highlands much better than Lord Selkirk, can instruct him that within its bounds there is abundant capacity

capacity for the employment of all the population, and pasturage land enough besides. His notion of banishing agriculture entirely from the Highlands, and the parallel scheme of dismissing pasturage wholly from the plains of England, may be extremely ingenious in theory, but the visions of theory do not always accommodate the homely circumstances of vulgar practice. It may be beautiful in fancy to see the Highlander importing every ounce of his bread corn, and to view his southern neighbours driving every ox and every sheep to the pastures of Lochaber. But it is believed that a farmer would inform the Noble Lord, that though the relative proportions of arable and grafs land must doubtless vary in different places, still his convenience depends on the union, not on the separation of the two.

Dismissing, however, the idea of Highland improvement altogether, are we to forget that there is other land to cultivate in Britain, in districts less inaccessible than those which have fallen within the proscriptions of Lord Selkirk; land which at this moment lies waste, *only from the want of hands to till it?*—Or is it an answer to that objection to observe, that Government must not compel, “by restrictive laws,” men disposed to emigrate, to seek employment within the kingdom, because, in that even, the labour would be

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unwelcome, and the produce scanty?—Sir, we do not allude to compulsion. The labour which is forced is never kindly; it accords not with *our* island; it smells too rankly of America and her islands. We allude not to it. We recommend to Lord Selkirk, and others who have the power, to invite and court, not to drive, the unemployed Highlander. Even in distress and penury, he needs temptations to draw him abroad; and, if blandishments are to be given, why not tempt to domestic service, even though emigration should thereby sicken and decay, as for two years past it has been doing, through the beneficent measures of the Legislature, and the patriotic labours of the Highland Society? No man will require a greater bribe to travel to a nearer than to a more distant spot, especially when, in the latter case, he has not the *power to return*.—They only who have witnessed an emigrant departure can know how small an offer would change the destination of the travellers. Such of your readers as have chanced to peruse Mrs Grant's beautiful and just description of whole families wandering to the shore, while in pathetic strains they sung, "We return no more *," may guess the affecting truth, and rest assured, that it is necessity, not choice, which actuates the emigrant.

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* Poems by Mrs Grant of Laggan.

As to *manufactures*, the elegant and Noble Author has denied even the capabilities of the Highlander. He denies that he is fitted for any thing beyond the labour "of the porter or the barrowman." This again is a condemnation far too broad. It may be true that a Highlander grown to man's estate may be much about as unfit to begin the study of the nicer operations of mechanical labour, as the Noble Lord, after five and twenty years of literary pursuit, would probably be. But this does not indicate a natural disqualification for the ordinary purposes of manufacturing industry, if the education is begun sufficiently soon. Every manufacturing company in Scotland can prove my assertion; and as to the establishment of local manufactures among themselves, alas! Sir, it is not the failure, it is the *absence* of the experiment, which drives the poor Highlander from his home.

This allusion to the possibility of employing these wanderers in our own country, leads me to say a word or two more on the means which (independently of public works) have been proposed for the preservation of Highland population. It is truly surprising how lightly Lord Selkirk has treated these things. The same man, to whom remote colonization presents almost no difficulties, who can cheerfully embark to people the desert, to transform the wilderness, to
overpower

overpower the strongest obstacles of nature, and the total want of arts, starts at the very mention of improvement in his own country. He rejects the whole class of measures which have been suggested for the preservation of our Highland brethren; he will not admit that the improvement of waste lands can answer; and, as already mentioned, he is not less hopeless of the plans of manufactures and the fisheries. Now, in regard to waste land, his Lordship's incredulity is passing strange; for he himself allows that the attempts hitherto made towards this object have been successful, and leave no doubt "that, by this means, a number of people may every where be retained." These are his words; and yet he argues against the plan, because of the general poverty of the people.

I answer, that if the people are poor, the public is powerful; and I repeat, that if aid is wanting, it is better to aid the man who remains than the man who leaves you; better to tempt the adherent than the fugitive. Few and simple are the Highlander's wants. He needs protection and instruction more than money. Find him these, and trust me, his industry in his native cottage will not be inferior to his activity in an American wigwam. The same observations apply both to agricultural and manufacturing improvements. In both, the difficulties rest much more in the

the want of a little present means, and of skilful instruction, than in the obduracy of constitutional indolence, or the disadvantages of local circumstance.

Lord Selkirk, it is true, appears to think only of manufactures on the great scale—of an “accumulation of people”—of the necessity for a ready supply of all sorts of artists—of the accommodations of neighbouring markets, &c. Really, Sir, this is surprising; there is no end to objections, if one is resolved to find them. Were we proposing to plant a Manchester, or a Birmingham on the instant, all the requisites of multitudes, of ready-made mechanics, and of competing marts might be thought of. But raising our ideas not higher than towards Lochbroom or Ullapool, we must be permitted to reduce our necessities to the level of an infantine trade, and the employment of a people just emerging from barbarism.

Lastly, in regard to the fisheries; the Noble Lord has not been able to advance against this grand resource from the evils of Highland super-population, one argument, but the obstacle of the salt laws, and the incompatibility of connecting the profession of fishing, with the cultivation of land. Parliament at a breath can, and it is to be hoped will soon remove the one; for the *salt laws* are now known for certain to be prejudicial to the fisheries;—and experience will

will by and bye correct the other. A Highlander is not absolute proof against instruction and advice. If he were, Lord Selkirk must have found other tenants for his transatlantic estate. These people will listen to you, if you will teach them, as a friend.—Somewhat jealous at first, they certainly are; but if you once gain them, they are not fickle. All therefore that is wanted, is to convince them of the danger of uniting two inconsistent professions, and this last objection is at an end. Lord Selkirk, I understand, was just one day at Tobermory, and that a very bad one, inasmuch, that his Lordship was mostly confined to the house. It is said, indeed, that he passed a few days more in the *interior* of Mull, (at Quinish I think); but that visit could as little improve his Lordship's acquaintance with the condition of the fisheries on the coast, as a visit to Durham or Northallerton could enable another man to decide on the existing circumstances of the Newcastle coaleries. With this slender opportunity of information, he nevertheless stands forth to advocate the condemnation of a source of national wealth—which, had his facts been unchallengeable, a Briton should have been slow to decry, and slower to counteract.

In truth, on this head, as on others, the candour of this Noble Lord has induced him to answer himself.

self. In the same Chapter, in which he denies that the fisheries afford an antidote to emigration, he owns that wherever the experiment has been fairly made, (as in the case of Mr Maclauchlan of Maclauchlan) *it has succeeded.*

AMICUS.

LETTER VI.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD & CHRONICLE.

SIR,

IT is one of Lord Selkirk's most favourite theories, that emigration "has no permanent effect on population." This fancy, however, is obviously self-contradictory in one sense, and its application is manifestly inexpedient in another. It is impossible to deny that those who depart, not to return, must, for themselves and children, for certain diminish the stock of the population of the country which they abandon; and it is not less impossible to dispute, that even on the footing that the place of those emigrants may be filled by others in the progress of ages, still the *immediate* loss to the parent state must be felt. Touching this mat-

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ter, the Noble Lord has chiefly referred to the instance of the Isle of Sky, as illustrative of his position, contending that the multiplication of the people in that island has gradually advanced, in spite of all the drains of emigration. Before, however, his Lordship is in condition to require our acquiescence in this instance, he is bound to tell us (which he has not done) how many people have gone *to* Sky since the period assumed in his calculations. To enumerate the exported, and to draw a veil over the *imports* (who have been numerous in the Isle of Sky,) is not exactly to furnish accurate data. The fact is, Lord Selkirk has for once misapprehended the elemental principles of his own theory, or at least their application. The necessarily progressive increase of the stock, is a first principle both in the animal and the vegetable world; and population must go on, if its progress is not positively stopped. But this affords no argument to prove the necessity of an artificial check, unless it can be demonstrated that the abundance of the population exceeded the opportunities of employment and the means of support. It is time enough to lop the tree of its branches, when they have begun either to encumber the adjacent ground, or to injure the parent stem. It will be soon enough to banish our luxuriant population, when the desarts of our own country are
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less extensive, and the times in which we live less perilous.

But I have yet a heavier objection to the speculations of the Earl of Selkirk. Asserting that a change has of late years arisen in the very "character" of the Highland peasantry, he has pressed his delusive schemes of emigration as a salutary antidote against the growing spirit "of discontent." A revolution in national character, and that a revolution of discontent, is indeed a serious matter, sufficient to justify almost any prevention, sufficient even to authorise partial extirpation. But as the evil is awful, so it should not be alleged on slight grounds; nor should we forget, that to get rid of one calamity, men have oftentimes rushed into the bosom of a worse. In the present instance, I believe the complaint to be imaginary, and the remedy to be pernicious. The Ross-shire mobs indeed I have heard of, as well as Lord Selkirk. But let it be remembered, that these were mere local and temporary excesses, which firmness in the Gentry would probably have repressed, which the efforts of a single Circuit Court extinguished, and which owed their origin as much to the period when they arose as to the introduction of sheep farming. In 1792, the spirit of revolution pervaded higher ranks than the peasants of Ross-shire. At that time, Sir, if I have not been

been misinformed, some men of better information than Ross-shire probably contains, are said to have inconsiderately predicted the fall of our Government, and enthusiastically to have avowed a passion for American emigration. Thanks to God, these sentiments have vanished with the fever which produced them, and the peaceful disposition of the Highland peasantry is now as pure as would be their contentment, if American advisers would let them rest. Were it otherwise, however, still would I ask, Is banishment the only cure for internal discontent?—I have understood that the blood of the human body may be purified, without being absolutely drawn off, and I should suppose that the dissatisfactions of a people may be removed without the transportation of their persons. Would Lord Selkirk, therefore, but apply the strength of his talents to cure the malady, not the individual, we should applaud his exertions. While his attentions are confined to the removal of the patient, without the removal of the contagion, those who remain owe him but little thanks. The ranks of the infected may be thinned, but the seat of the disease has not been extirpated.

And, here, let me pay a passing tribute of praise to that society whose labours Lord Selkirk, though a member, has disclaimed, but whose zeal, I trust, he

has not extinguished.—Their motives no man can censure; and as the effect of their labours has undoubtedly been to check, in some, and that not small degree, the phrenzy of emigration, even the objectionable portions of their plans and regulations (if such there really are) might have been pardoned for the good they have promoted. Be this as it may in Lord Selkirk's eyes, we can only profess opposite impressions. Seeing that by their exertions, many families have been saved, at this portentous æra, to their country, and that a dawning spirit of industry has in many places been introduced, we trust the Highland Society will not relax its efforts to preserve an orderly and a valuable people against every necessity, and against every allurements, to emigration.

Could the writer of this letter suppose that his suggestions were requisite either to animate the exertions or to enlarge the information of the Highland Society, with a view to this important object, these should not be withheld. But as he is convinced of the zeal, so is persuaded of the intelligence of this distinguished association. Already do we discover the testimonies of that zeal and intelligence in the success of their measures in behalf of their humble and remote brethren; and can it be doubted, that a spirit, of which the advantages have already been as remarkable as the
ardour,

ardour, will continue? On the contrary, we look forward to future exertions, of yet greater extent, and of equal benefit, to the alteration of inexpedient regulations, to the commutation of peculiar and improvident imposts, to the recovery of waste lands, to the extension of valuable fisheries, to the increase of comfortable villages, and to the introduction of infant manufactories. These are the cheering prospects which we delight to contemplate, and which the exertions of the Highland Society, and of individuals of influence, promise yet to realize. And these prospects we can enjoy, although Lord Selkirk could establish to demonstration, that their attainment must operate to the destruction of all his schemes of American colonization.

Nor ought the exertions of Government to be forgotten by a grateful people. It has obtained laws, it has given bounties, and it has furnished employment, by the promotion of great public works, to many who bless their benefactors. It is true, that these works, though extensive, are but temporary. Certainly they never would have been begun, but in the anticipation of a conclusion. Yet limited as their endurance is, they are nevertheless greatly calculated to repress both the spirit and the causes of emigration. They give bread to hundreds at this moment; they must continue

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to furnish encreasing employment for many years to come ; they teach and disseminate a genuine spirit of industry ; and when at last their labours are accomplished, then the country itself must rapidly improve by the facility of access between the most distant parts. These are no visionary consequences ; they are the indispensable results of what we see before us. I cannot therefore commend the man who would chill the munificence of his country, were it nothing else but munificence ; I can still less praise him, who would paralyze a liberality which appears to be not less ultimately beneficial to the giver, than to the receiver.

AMICUS.

LETTER VII.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.

SIR,

To overcome the motives which have hitherto led the emigrant Highlanders to settle in the territory of the

the United States of America, Lord Selkirk recommends, that "some pretty strong inducement should be held out to the first party who will settle in other situations offered to them;" and it was not to be doubted that his Lordship's doctrine should thus accord with the example which he has furnished.—It is strange, however, that the same man who would in this way bribe the emigrant to turn in his course, should cast a cold and repulsive eye on every suggestion calculated to divert him from that course entirely. To advise the application of inducements in order to guide the destination of the wanderer, and to reject every persuasive for avoiding the radical evil, is not of apparent wisdom.

Had his Lordship's scheme of *inducements* been long and unsuccessfully tried with a view to the prevention of emigration altogether, then the propriety of a measure calculated to alleviate that which would not cure, must have been undeniable. But it is time enough to resort to palliatives, when the antidote is proved to be vain; and we have not yet seen sufficient evidence of the failure of the latter. We know that it is long since the mere gossip's tale of "happy regions, and fortunate islands," has lost its efficacy in the Highlands. The decay of the ancient system of intular subordination, may, for a time, indeed have raised

raised an epidemic desire of wandering; but that fever has cooled, and the emissaries of emigration are obliged to use enticements. In truth, the Scottish emigration was never that capricious movement, which in former times prevailed among those regions of the North, from whence the irruptions issued which subverted the power of Rome, where the state of life was always unsettled, and where colonization was systematical. In Scotland, it has been the immediate result of a peculiar cause, and is susceptible, of course, of a peculiar corrective.

To what degree the mischiefs of emigration, if uncorrected, may advance, we venture not to foretel. Our object is only to shew that the system itself is corrupt. It tends to the removal of subjects whom the State requires; and it tends not to the probable happiness of the people themselves. The first of these facts is beyond all dispute, for emigration without removal is a solicism and an absurdity; and the importance of preventing this removal can only be denied when the claims of the state, and the demands of improvers, are universally answered. The second fact is no less within the assurance of every man who will condescend to inquire before he pronounces. Happiness, Sir, does often follow in the paths of emigration. Of the numbers who have travelled to the

new

new world within these 50 years, it will be found, on investigation, that the greater part has fallen early under disappointment and distress. Their dreams of felicity have terminated in penury and toil; and to the evils of indigence have been superadded the horrors of perpetual banishment.

I have learned from a gentleman of great respectability, who has resided long in America, and in a situation affording peculiar means of information, that his surprise at the statements in Lord Selkirk's book regarding the prospects and possibilities which await the emigrants, exceeds all example; that he knows that of the whole mass of those who have heretofore emigrated, not one in ten has survived, above a few years, the calamities of his fate; and that of those few, the descendants have hardly in any one instance reached to the third generation. Again, in respect to the labours which even those, whose constitutional powers can best withstand the pressure of the ordinary hardships of a new life, must encounter, I am warranted by the same authority to deny the physical possibility of the Noble Lord's calculations; to assert that the most able negro on the whole continent of America would sink under the work Lord Selkirk has assigned for each of his Highlanders; and to require of Lord Selkirk, if he shall hereafter persist in his statements,

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that he shall support them by some authority of unquestionable experience.

On this subject, Sir, I repeat that enquiry is within the reach of us all ; and those who take the trouble to enquire may soon learn to estimate the accuracy of Lord Selkirk's deductions.

Very probably those who originally went, at the commencement of this mania, were such as could be spared in the immediate circumstances of the country ; and it is not less probable, that the delusion of the benefits of their departure were long kept up by those more wary adventurers, who, having obtained grants of American land, were disposed to invite settlers from all quarters. But this does not obviate the objections to modern emigration. Lord Selkirk, indeed, constantly repeats, that the people will go at all events, and it is on this foundation, that he so plausibly argues for his plan of temptations. He would rather make them a sort of Anglo-Americans than total Americans, and perhaps there may be something in the scheme. But what I maintain is, that it has not yet been ascertained, that these people will migrate at all hazards. So far as the trial has been made, many who thought of going, have been prevailed on to abandon their resolution ; a fact to which Lord Selkirk himself bears witness. Why not therefore pur-

fue

due these measures of retention? The worst possible servant to any state, is an emigrant subject. A pensioned Hessian is better than an ejected citizen. For if the former has no attachment to inspire him, he has at least the recollection of no sorrows to cool him.

Lord Selkirk has also been desirous to impress the idea, that none but men of the class of *farmers* are disposed to emigrate, in order, doubtless, to enable him to argue, that with such men no supply of the means of labour, nor any temptation, but land, would operate as a restraint. In this, however, there is a twofold mistake. The farmers are not the only emigrants, although, when men of that class do move, they form the most distinguished part of the cargo, from the comparative eminence of their *status*, as well as from the stock which they possess. In the second place, it is erroneous to suppose, that even this description of persons cannot be provided for at home with at least as much facility as the cottagers. They are the very persons whom the waste lands of Britain would suit; the very men whose little capitals, and whose natural energies, their country might, by judicious arrangements, best turn to its own good. But these men, it seems, from the code of the Earl of Selkirk, are nevertheless to be consigned to expend

the vigour of their minds in a state of banishment, and the fruits of their former industry in the desperate speculations of blind experiment.

We are told, moreover, that if we so change the usual 'destination' of the emigrants as to get them conducted exclusively to our own colonies, they will constitute a bulwark of future strength to the parent State. Even were this a certain fact, instead of a speculative idea, it does not obviate the question, Why we should let them go at all? Or why allure men by any means to leave us, when the business of the nation requires them at home. It is in vain to denominate these people the "overflowings of our population." That land can hardly be said to overflow with people, in which there are thousands of desolate and unemployed wastes, and for which the various artificial establishments call unceasingly for supplies.

And let it be remembered, that all this warmth of attachment which our colonies are to foster, is yet to be discovered. The history of mankind does not furnish very favourable testimonies of the zeal or constancy of colonial affection, even in the case of original, voluntary, and gregarious separation. In general, the spirit of independence has overset the affections of kindred, and even the feelings of gratitude; and I may put it to the recollection of your readers, whether, since the
world

world began, a colony has ever declined to shew, that it could do without the mother country, if its circumstances enabled it to display an independence. Besides, it is, to ordinary minds, a strange thing to imagine, that the medium of transplantation should improve the native force of Britain, for British service. Moderate conceptions should rather conjecture, that if the depopulation of the mother country shall ever arrive at that pitch when our armies must be recruited from Prince Edward's Island, we need care but little whether we recruit at all. The original emigrants must then be off the stage of life; and their posterity will, in all likelihood, be as ready to hearken to the seductions of other powers, as to the invitations of the country which cast out their fathers.—The French, who detect us on system, are always busy with our colonists; and the Americans, who hate us in revenge, are no less alert in their own neighbourhood. It seems doubtful, therefore, whether there is any wisdom in retaining so many colonies as we already possess; to encourage more were surely unwise. We could even better understand the policy of persuading refugees to settle on the naked shores of Scotland, than the plan of aiding Scotchmen to colonize the shores of Labrador, or the Hudsons.

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The “ pretty strong inducement ” which Lord Selkirk advises, is to manage emigration so, that it shall move, not by detachments, but *en masse*—wholesale emigration. This at least is honest. So fervid is the spirit of this Noble (and assuredly this excellent) enthusiast, that nothing short of extirpation will serve his purpose. “ If means could be found (says the Noble Earl) of *influencing a considerable body of people*, connected by the ties of blood and friendship, they may have less aversion to try a new situation ; and if such a settlement be once conducted safely through its first difficulties, till the adventurers feel a confidence in their resources, and acquire some attachment to the country, the object may be considered as almost entirely accomplished.”—These, Sir, are the very words of Lord Selkirk. Get but a *body of people* to move, “ and no peculiar *encouragement* will be any longer necessary.” I cannot but lament to hear such sentiments from the lips of an hereditary pillar of the State under which he was born ; they besit not the natural protector of a whole people. ’Tis true, they are limited to the expression “ destination.” But wherefore should even the branches of a mischievous policy be encouraged ?—Why not root out the system entirely ?—If it is bad in the abstract, and

we

we think no unprejudiced man can deny its abstract evil tendency, is it not better to attack emigration in its vitals at once, than merely to soften its worst cor-rosions?—Finally, if this phrenzy is created by the peculiar condition of the country at the moment, why not rather struggle to amend the adverse circumstances of the times, than to accelerate the means of their continued operation?

Men may be persuaded from, as well as to, a peculiar line of conduct. Lord Selkirk proves, from the case of the Georgia settlers in 1772, that the original recruiting of emigrants was but up-hill work; and he also proves, from his own labours in this vineyard of emigration, that to divert the dejected wanderer in his course is, even now, not a bit more easy. Earnestly, therefore, would we recommend it to this Noble Person to try his fortune in a new course; and since these people are so reluctant to move, at least in the “RIGHT” path, to attempt the means of their employment in their native land. That there are various means of such employment, the wisdom of Government has already shewn; and that these sources are not yet exhausted, genius far inferior to Lord Selkirk’s could easily unfold.

AMICUS.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.

SIR,

THE concluding section of Lord Selkirk's book is calculated, I acknowledge, to warm the imaginations and interest the hearts of almost every class of readers. We are awakened to the fate of 800 human beings, enlisted to relinquish their native country, enticed to seek for happiness in a land which they know not, to traverse the forest and the desert "with the helplessness of infancy," to encounter, through the dateless limits of their exile, every peril which the utmost difficulties of nature can present, and every disappointment which the failure of delusive expectations can occasion. In this history of Lord Selkirk's Practical Essay on the Advantages of Emigration, we necessarily participate in the feelings which have animated the pen of the describer. To so curious a picture of experimental humanity, every one is attracted. The
philosopher

philosopher sees the application of a new theory ; the traveller is introduced into an unknown tract ; and even the novelist, in a story almost romantic, dreams of the visions of a Fairy-land. But all this, notwithstanding, I would advise the public to pause ere they finally approve, and I would beseech the Noble Author to hesitate before he ships off his next cargo of fellow citizens, even to the happy shores of St Lawrence. Let him consider only, that every man who is induced, by his perfusion, to leave his native home, is a subject, all but lost to his Sovereign ; and let him also remember, that of every such man, who so goes, and repents him, the future misery lies on the head of the Earl of Selkirk.—I have no pleasure in urging these eventual accusations, against so eminent and so worthy a man ; but, in accuracy, I am bound with both to charge him. The information of his own pamphlet demonstrates that, of his *first* exportation, many went out reluctant ; and the least acquaintance with human nature must teach, that even of those who embarked cheerfully, a proportion at least are, ere now, sorrowful.

“ What strong mysterious links enchain the heart
To regions where our youthful seasons passed ;
In foreign land, tho’ happier be the clime,

Tho’

Tho' round our board smile all the friends we love,
 The face of Nature wears a stranger's look."—
 —“ What though the cluster'd vine there hardly tempts
 The traveller's hand ; tho' birds of dazzling plume
 Perch on the loaded boughs—" Give me,"
 (Exclaims the banish'd man) " thy barren woods,
 " Poor Scotland !"——

Sir, the feeling which is here displayed is universal. The painting is indeed the Poet's, but its justice and application are not fictitious.

Admitting therefore to the full, the seductive powers of Lord Selkirk's description of his infant colony, we would have him cautiously to enquire, whether even already the " blaze of the woodfire," or his Lordship's own more cheering smiles, are not become inadequate to quash the busy labours of memory, and the recollection of happier days, among his western tenantry ; whether even by this time, every stroke of the ax, is not re-echoed, by a throb from the heart, at the remembrance of the impenetrable barriers which separate these " voluntary" exiles from the spot where they had often wished to go down to the dust. If our suspicions are just (and they are not entirely founded on imagination) we may be permitted to intreat of his Lordship next to try the plan of a *domestic* settlement for the occupation of the
 overflowings

overflowings of his Hebreidian countrymen. Should
 he himself have no spare corner within the bounds of
 his paternal domains, we will aid him in the discovery
 of abundant and ready situations, where, if there are
 no proper materials for the log-house and the wigwam,
 there is at least a foil accommodated to the experi-
 ence, and a climate fitted to the constitutions of the
 people ; where, if the luxuriance of the prospect, and
 the productive powers of the land are inferior, the
 profits of the labourer are at least sure, and the gale
 which blows around him, *blows without a pesti-*
lence.

To trace the effusions of genius is always a delight-
 ful task. He must be a fastidious mortal who can re-
 fuse to admire execution, even where his heart and con-
 viction disapprove the design. But the mere display of
 abilities, however captivating, ought not on the other
 hand to extenuate, since it can never atone for their
 perversion.

To see Lord Selkirk active in measures which must
 of necessity tend to rob his country of her peasantry,
 may please the fancy of those whom the fascinations of
 his writing, and the admiration of his zeal have cap-
 tivated ; but it is to be hoped that the more sober of
 his countrymen, may, on reflection, regret that this
 same ardour had not been monopolised in the creation

of villages and manufactories in the country which gave him birth, where his example would have been regarded with veneration, and his opinions referred to as a law.

I have now, Sir, taken the liberty to suggest, in the course of our short correspondence, the doubts which I entertain of the leading principles on which Lord Selkirk has founded his popular and attractive volume. Had it been my purpose to answer that production, paragraph by paragraph, I should certainly not have been deterred by any apprehension that those parts of it which I have passed unnoticed are of more difficult refutation than those to which I have ventured to object. But far different avocations, and circumstances of little importance to your readers, have prevented any attempt on my part to write a book. Believing, however, from my heart, in the dangerous tendency of a work which every man was reading, and many men (I admit) applauding, I have not hesitated to attempt to arrest this extensive spirit of commendation, even by the medium of a few detached paragraphs in a newspaper; in the hope that even these suggestions may excite more perfect investigations; and in the confidence that the concealment I have adopted may at least prove that I have been actuated

uated by no impulse but attachment to the welfare of my country—

“ O Caledonia, stern and wild !”—

—“ Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,

Land of the mountain and the flood,

Land of my Sires !—what mortal hand

Can ere untie the filial band

That knits me to the rugged strand !”

I am, Sir,

Your obedient fervant,

AMICUS.

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SUPPLEMENTARY OBSERVATIONS,

APPLICABLE TO THE SUBJECT OF THE PRECEDING
LETTERS.

THE Earl of SELKIRK's labours are directed to the causes, the consequences, and the cure of Highland emigration. These causes he reckons irresistible and imperious, but the consequences he esteems to be totally unimportant to the safety of the parent state. The cure, or correctory measures, again, so far as any have ever been projected, he deems to be either futile or visionary.

The *causes* of emigration may be arranged, according to his Lordship, as follows: The alteration in Highland and insular manners, consequent on the abolition of the feudal system as it existed in those regions; the imperfections of soil and climate; the modern rise of rents; the introduction of sheep, and enlargement of farms; the scarcity of fuel; and the national character of the people. We looked through his Lordship's book for one

other cause of emigration, and we found it. It is, however, but justice to the Noble Author to add, that we saw it mentioned, only to be rejected and ridiculed. We allude to the labours of those who have found it their interest to awaken and cherish a disposition to emigrate.

The *consequences* of emigration, as they have been foreseen by Lord Selkirk, may be divided into two parts; domestic improvement, by the removal of an idle, and superfluous, and discontented population; and colonial aggrandizement by the acquisition of an active, and hardy, and well disposed people, to stock the desert, and cultivate the wild.

The *preventives* of emigration are least regarded in the speculations of the Noble Earl. Many, which the philanthropy or the genius of others have suggested, he has not thought it necessary to notice. There are others, to which he has adverted. These are, the waste lands; manufactures, and kelp; the fisheries; public works; restrictive regulations.

In the foregoing letters, these several subjects are briefly adverted to. A few additional strictures are now to be offered.—And, first, as to his Lordship's CAUSES of Highland emigration.

1. *Effects*

1. *Effects of the changes consequent on the abolition of clanship and the feudal system.*—The effects of the decay of feudal aristocracy, as it existed in the Highlands, has been admitted by *Amicus* to have been favourable to emigration. In his first and second letters, he expressly owned, that the alteration of the ancient system of manners and subordination, did, for a time, set loose a considerable body of people, whose temporary disappointment or distress naturally drove them to seek a new country, in remedy of evils which the situation of the land of their birth could not at the moment rectify. But this admission must be taken with a twofold qualification: *First*, The change alluded to had but a temporary operation, as a cause of emigration; and, *secondly*, This short-lived effect, though grievous, was amply compensated by other consequences, of which the duration was to be infinitely greater, and the advantages comparatively unbounded.

Change of circumstances must always occasion temporary embarrassments to the inhabitants of any country. There is an inevitable period of difficulty between the cessation of ancient habits, and the reconciliation to new employments, which must ever produce partial distress. In such cases, however,

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it is equally the duty and the interest of a Legislature to navigate the evil, by such regulations as are best calculated to facilitate the progress of the ultimate improvement for which the alterations were intended. The change of Highland manners, on the demolition of clanship, like every national revolution, great or small, came upon many who were indisposed towards, and unprovided for, the experiment. But novelty soon wears off. The most ignorant, and the most obstinate, become, through time, satisfied with any change. A Frenchman will gallop over the circle of possible revolutions in the narrow compass of ten or a dozen years; and in that period, approve, reject, create, and destroy every form of government of which human genius can figure the imagination. A Highlander's disposition is somewhat more steady. But stable as are his habits, still even *he* partakes of the nature of humanity, and may by degrees be thoroughly reconciled to a domestic, as well as to a foreign,—to a less, as well as to a greater—change of manners and of views. Hence it has happened, and naturally happened, that the natives of the Highlands of Scotland, when they became familiarized to the revolution of manners and of system; when the new arrangements

ments had become visible, and intelligible, and stationary ; and when, moreover, they had learned the deplorable fate of many of the first adventurers who braved the dangers of the Atlantic, and tried the experiment of American felicity ; began at length to settle themselves under the new order ; to be content to labour, not to fight ; to eat the earnings of industry, not the fruits of rapine. Thus it has been, that a little time, conjoined with the exertions of Government, and the adjustments of the landholders, has softened the asperities of that temporary irritation, which, in some measure, had raised the original spirit of emigration.

But had these means of reconciliation been far less efficacious than they were, still there arose another medium of restoration to favour, in the people's own conviction and experience of the essential advantages of the new system. A stubborn individual may remain for ever blind even to his interest, but a whole people cannot long continue in darkness. The substitution of regular laws in place of arbitrary rule ; the protection of personal liberty ; the security of property ; and even a very partial introduction of the arts, and of the comforts of social life, were improvements, to the value of which human nature could not for ever remain insensible.

fenfible. "Nor are the Highlanders," fays Mr Brown*, "infenfible to this great change. They contraft their prefent ftate with that of their forefathers, and draw the proper inference."

As a "caufe," therefore, of emigration, the change of manners fo amply and fo warmly painted by Lord Selkirk, while it is admitted *to have been* fuch caufe, cannot be acknowledged to be fo now. It affords no vindication to the friends of modern depopulation, that fentiments which are unpatriotic in them, might have been forgiven in their forefathers. It prefents no apology for the prefent lovers of emigration, that a former generation were excufable for their diffatisfaction, or juftifiable in their own meafures of adventure. The violence of a temporary ferment, is not the criterion of genuine opinions. What Lord Selkirk was bound to have adduced, was an enumeration of thofe regular, permanent and fystematical caufes, of which the operation is conflant, habitual and durable; not the momentary effervescence of a fudden derangement, which a few years muft always remove, and which, in the prefent inftance, a few years have already corrected.

Before we take leave of this topic, of the effects
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* *Vide* "Strictures on Lord Selkirk's Observations," p. 13.

of the change of manners, it may be proper to notice one circumstance which is frequently interwoven into the speculations of the Noble Lord. His readers are repeatedly informed, that the *cordiality* which once subsisted between the Highland gentry and their people has totally vanished; and that in the room of the condescension and familiarity, which in former times won the hearts and cheered the spirits of the vassal, there has grown up a cold, fullen and repulsive haughtiness, the ordinary concomitant of that selfish spirit, which commercial habits and the love of money too often engender. In this, as in many other of the Noble Lord's unostentatious, but insinuating remarks, there appears to be a curious mixture of truth and of imagination. Always enough of the one to render his statements specious; and generally enough of the other to make them suspicious.

The condescension of the ancient Scottish chieftains is certainly understood to have been remarkable, so far as it extended. But it is not believed that it reached beyond a particular class of favourites; and, at all events, it was but *condescension* at the best. Lord Selkirk may depend upon it, that the clanish chief was a far prouder man than his more opulent successor. With the imposing but empty display

play of parade, he had the substantial authority of command ; and, what is more, he had the no less substantial power to punish. Such a man might occasionally be familiar with the people around him ; but such a man would seldom suffer these people to forget their distance. On the other hand, although the growth of a warmth of attachment is natural, whenever there exists a frequency of intercourse, conjoined with the means of reward and of protection ; yet still the attachment which is formed for a superior, and which hangs on the capricious exercise of arbitrary rule, can never be so very steady, or so very essential to the formation of character, as Lord Selkirk seems to imagine. And that the decay of an uncontrolled power, should now produce what his Lordship terms “ feelings of disgust and irritation,” appears altogether improbable. The members of the present generation came not into the world, until the ancient feudal “ condescension” had long decayed ; and surely a race of men, who had not for themselves experienced the change, could not be disgusted or offended with that change. Disgust, without the sensation of a contrast, is unintelligible.

Besides, the picture of modern manners which the noble author has drawn, appears to be greatly overcharged.

charged. Altered as is the old provincial aristocracy, even now the cordiality and unaffected condescension of the Highland lairds, is probably as great and as warm as it ever was in the rudest period of clanship. Is there a man but Lord Selkirk, who ever has set a foot in the Highlands, and who will deny the existence of that kindness of manners, and that affectionate patronage towards their people, which to this hour is a prominent feature in the character of the Highland gentry? The lofty strut of military command, may indeed have subsided; but, if it has yielded to that more gentle demeanour which betokens a peaceful connection, we cannot discover how it should offend. It is very true, the *tenantry* are become more independent; and they, perhaps, in the pride of that independence, may have somewhat advanced the estimate of their own claims. But, will Lord Selkirk say, that the tenant's opinion of his own exaltation, and his sense of his improved security, both of person and property, are calculated seriously to dissatisfy him with his condition, or to irritate him against his landlord?

As to certain weighty "obligations" which, it is said, the chieftains of former times owed to their vassals, and which, it is supposed, the tenants of the present day love to recount, and ought to

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have repaid them, we answer, *1st*, That any such obligations were mutual; service for protection, and protection for service: *2dly*, That even a Highlander's mind is too acute not to discover, and too just not to feel, that the obligations of former generations were discharged in their own day, and warrant no claims at the suit of the childrens' children, of those who are supposed to have earned the original boon.

2. *Imperfections of Soil and Climate.*—On this subject, we may simply refer the public to the map; to the evidence of every man who knows the Highlands; nay, to the testimony of Lord Selkirk himself. A very great proportion of the country from whence the emigrants issue, lies to the southward of many of the most cultivated districts of Scotland; to the south of Fife, Angus and Kincardine; and to the south of the lower divisions of Perth, Aberdeen, Banff, Moray and Ross shires. That its climate is unequal, is true:—such is the condition of every hilly and every insular country. That its climate may also be moist on the whole, is also true; but the quantity of rain which falls there, is not generally greater, and seldom so great as that which falls in Ayrshire, in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, or in various other parts of the western division of Scotland.

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From the same obvious causes, the soil is also unequal; and hence its alternate adaptation to most of the varieties of culture, and to all the purposes of pasturage. But inequality does not imply insufficiency. Embosomed in the mountains, there are innumerable tracts of improvable land; and around the various rivers, lakes and coasts, there is abundant territory of a character perfectly susceptible of cultivation. Mr Brown, whose veracity and whose perfect knowledge of the country, will probably be admitted, even by his opponents in argument, assures us, that of "these countries (the islands and western coast), the climate is by no means so unfavourable for the raising of corn-crops as is commonly imagined, and both soil and climate are admirably adapted for the potato, and every species of green crop*." "Amongst the Hebrides," (says the learned Dr Anderson, in his Report to the Lords of the Treasury, in the year 1784), "I found many large and fair islands, containing extensive districts of land, endowed with an uncommon degree of fertility, and many tracts of much larger extent, consisting of soil, that, by a skilful culture, might be converted into corn-fields, which would furnish subsistence

* Strictures, p. 24.

silence to a great number of people ; that the climate in these islands is more favourable for bringing corn to maturity, and that the harvest is for the most part earlier than on the parallel coasts of Scotland ; and that limestone and marl, and shelly sand, which are the manures best calculated for improving these soils, abound so much, that one or other of these manures could be got in every place, at a very moderate expence," &c. But what need is there to resort to other authorities ; the Earl himself admits, that even of the *mountains*, " few of them are entirely destitute of spots in which cultivation might be practicable * ;" and as to the country in general, he observes, that " the tract of country known by the general name of Highlands, is not every where mountainous ; and there are situations where, in all probability, sheep-farming will not prevail. In some parts, the country consists of low hills, more adapted for pasturing black cattle than sheep ; in others, there is *a great proportion of arable land* †." It is true, that his Lordship qualifies this last admission with this assertion, " But the climate is generally a discouragement to tillage, even where the soil and situation oppose no obstacles." This qualification,

* Observations, &c. p. 31.

† Page 36.

tion, however, broad as it is, not only does not destroy the concession that there is an abundance of arable land within the boundaries of the proper Highlands, but it does not even go the length of denying the capabilities of such land, even under the disadvantages of a climate comparatively inferior to that of some other parts of the island. The fact, besides, is indisputable, that crops for the food of man *are* raised in these districts; and the same climate which is able to nourish these crops at present, must be equally able to nourish others on a more extensive scale. There is no just occasion, therefore, to desolate the peaceful hamlet, or to bring the parting tear from any eye in the land we refer to, from the notion that this land is exhausted of its powers, or limited in the gifts of nature.

Whether, taken all and all, the soil and climate of the Highlands of Scotland, may or may not be as fit for the service of man, as the soil and climate of Prince Edward's Island, we are not altogether certified, and we have no occasion to inquire. Our present business is to discover, whether the defects of the former form a "real cause of emigration." Now, this there seems to be every reason to dispute. The country is the same country which it was before the rage of emigration began. Its political circumstances

circumstances unquestionably have fluctuated, but its natural condition has been rather too stationary ; and even as to these political alterations, their tendency has not been to augment, but to diminish and overrule the existing incommodations of soil and climate. They have tended to the diffusion of skill and capital, to the increase of cultivated surface, and to the employment of additional hands. Whatever, therefore, may have been the real causes which have driven the people of whom we speak, to set their future happiness " upon a cast," that cast being emigration, we may safely challenge Lord Selkirk to prove, that ever one individual of them forsook his native country from an impression of the evils of its climate, or from experience of the obduracy of its soil.

3. *The Advance of Land Rent.*—In arguing, that the rise of modern rent is a cause of emigration, Lord Selkirk's remarks seem to imply, not only that the measures, but that the very object of the landholders is calculated to inspire the love of change among their people. He does not indeed expressly say, that these proprietors are absolutely disposed towards oppression ; but assuredly he does represent the case as if they were become indifferent to the comforts of their people, and careless of every consequence, provided only their rent-rolls increase.

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The love of money is undoubtedly a passion as universal as it is powerful. It will blunt, if it does not subdue, the finest feelings of the human heart. But yet we cannot believe, that the most unbounded spirit of avarice of which the mind of man is capable, is so very gross and unreasonable a passion, that its appetites must be whetted with such oppression, as would evidently tend to counteract its very object. A Highland landlord will naturally prefer a better to a worse rent for his acres; but a Highland landlord is not so weak as to exact a rent which his tenant cannot pay with equal safety and comfort. He would soon be taught to discover, that the most mischievous scheme which the love of money ever suggested, would be the exaction of rents which the people could not pay, and prosper. This subject of *rent* is too often made the handle of very bad reasoning, and in some instances, the engine of very bad purposes. Tenants ought not to be misled. No rent is a "high rent" which the industrious tacksman can afford to pay. On the other hand, no rent is low rent when the tenant who pays it is not industrious. It is for the tenant's own good, to require of him such an equivalent for the land he holds, as shall positively secure the exertion of his activity and attention.

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tion. Beyond that proportion, there is no great fear that proprietors will ever stretch. They are not independent of their people ; and must study to give them reasonable cause for contentment. In truth, self-interest alone would insure this object. A contented tenant, who pays a fair rent, and thrives, is evidently a better, and will always be, a more favourite tenant than a dissatisfied and heart-wrung being, who is unable to contend with the oppression which grinds him. As, then, the landlord's natural attachment to the prosperity of those around him, and his no less natural regard for his own profit, afford a double security for the just comforts of the tenantry, it is not easy to comprehend the possibility of a general spirit of indifference to the condition and state of their people, among a race of gentry, in whom popularity has been a hereditary passion, and with whom self-interest is now allowed, even by Lord Selkirk, to be a modern attainment. In point of fact, we rather suspect that "high rent" is a bugbear, which some of the advocates of emigration have pressed into *their* service, than that oppressive exactions have really been introduced, or of themselves have tended to hatch any serious popular discontent in the Highlands. It is impossible to doubt, that some of the more unworthy emissaries
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of emigration, have disingenuously laboured to compare the *high* rents of the Highlands with the *low* rents of America. It is no less impossible to doubt, that in such comparison, there would be little pains taken to disclose to the deluded people who were addressed, that the "high" rents of the Highlands may be paid, and yet the tenants succeed, while, for aught that experience teaches, the "low" rents of the western continent cannot, in the general, be paid for three years together, without the ruin of the occupants.

It is not to be expected that a tenant will not seek to pay as little as he can, whether his lease extends to the rocky shores of St Kilda, or to the gloomy forests of Prince Edward's. But some rent in both places he must pay. If he thinks a moment, he must discover, that sooner or later this rent will be made to correspond to the value of the subject. "In what, then, (he will ask himself), am I benefited by the payment of a lower rent abroad, than of a higher rent at home, if the ultimate profit to myself is the same?" And if the simplicity of his character is too great to prevent his putting this question before it is too late to do him good, it is the more requisite that men of understanding, like the Noble Earl, should study to instruct these inexperienced peasants, that the pro-

gressive advance of land-rent is the necessary result of the progressive depreciation of money ; of the extension of cultivation ; of the influence of commerce, and, finally, of the advancing prosperity of the tenants themselves. Perhaps, on this point, it may be answered, that the benevolence of the Noble Lord will induce *him* to deal with peculiar liberality towards his newly imported American tenantry. It may be so ; but let it be remembered, that though he is generous, he is not immortal, and other men will be just.

In short, the increase of modern land-rent affords no real cause for the malady of Highland emigration. Rent cannot be raised beyond what land can afford to pay, for otherwise the object would defeat itself ; and while rents are adequate, they furnish no just ground for complaint. Neither do they constitute even a nominal cause of dissatisfaction. In the dawnings of Highland emancipation, perhaps this, like other innovations, may have provoked an outcry. The clamour, however, has subsided. All-powerful custom has softened the original irritation ; and the present race of Highlanders can look as steadfastly, and as calmly on stipulations, which would have equally alarmed and enraged their ancestors, as their southern brethren can behold an income tax or a wine duty, the bare
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mention of which would have turned the brains of their grandfathers.

Another observation deserves attention. If the rise of rents were an inevitable cause of emigration, its operation, in some degree or other, would extend beyond the limits of the "**Highlands.**" For although the introduction of equivalent rent is but of modern standing in those more remote districts, and therefore the *degree* of popular dissatisfaction may there be more violent than elsewhere, yet it is perfectly evident, that as the origin of this dissatisfaction is seated in a passion of the human heart which is universal, the same cause must, to some extent or other, operate universally. Nevertheless, Lowland emigration is unknown. Individuals, indeed, occasionally try their fortunes from every quarter; but the disease is not known as an epidemic, beyond the proper bounds of the Highlands and Islands.

And still further on this general topic, it is impossible not to remark, that Lord Selkirk has borne a little too hard upon the Highland proprietors. In treating of the means which the Legislature has devised for the prevention of the evil which it is our earnest object to check, his Lordship observes*, that
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* Page 93.

the Highland landlords are the last persons whose interests ought to be consulted. " They have no right to complain of a change *which is their own work*, the necessary result of the mode in which they choose to employ their property. Claiming a right to use their lands as they see fit, and most for their own advantage, can they deny their tenantry an equal right to carry their capital and their labour to the best market they can find?" And again, " If the gentlemen of the Highlands are determined, at all events to preserve the population of their estates, it is unquestionably in their power, *by replacing their farms on the old footing, and relinquishing their advance of rent?* If they do not choose to make this pecuniary sacrifice, they must abide by the consequences; and it is with a bad grace they come to the Legislature for the means of obviating them?" All this appears to be intended to be severe, and it is so. But we hesitate not to maintain, that in all this, neither is the case quite fairly put, nor is the lash of the censure applied to the deserving party. The Highland gentry have never denied the right of their people to carry their labour and capital to the best market. They have no quarrel with the just privilege of personal liberty. What they complain of, is the dangerous

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and mistaken phrenzy of migration, abetted as it has been, both by errors of prejudice, and by the labours of the interested ; and what they ask, is the aid of the community, to rectify an evil which has become too gigantic for individual prowess to overcome.

Lord Selkirk, however, reckons that the landlords have forfeited their title to legislative protection in this instance, because they have pursued some of the ordinary means followed by the Lowland gentry for the improvement of their estates. This, however, were a hard sentence, for two reasons: *1st*, The emigration of which they complain, is not, as the author thinks, exclusively " their own work ;" and, *next*, The correction of the grievance which they solicit is not entirely for their own benefit.

1st, Highland emigration has been the work of others, as well as of the Highland landholders. Had strangers never come among them, disposed to interrupt the course of domestic contentment, there would still perhaps have been emigration, but there would have been less of it. Even Lord Selkirk, with all his benevolence of views, came among them to quicken a spirit which was beginning to subside. Such, at least, was the effect of his visit. This was *his* " work." What he would have said to any man who had ventured to interfere

tere on *his* estate, or in the arrangements of his establishment, he can best inform us. But, assuredly, it is unreasonable that his Lordship, after having laboured to thin the population on the estates of his neighbours, and preached the doctrines of emigration with successful industry among their tenantry and servants, should now turn to the masters, and inform them that they have little reason to complain of "their own work."

2dly, The aid of the Legislature was not desired merely to serve the interests of the proprietors. Highland population is certainly of importance to Highland landholders; but it is of still more importance to the interests of the State. Individuals, however patriotic, cannot be expected to retain a breed of men for the public weal. But even were the interests of the proprietors alone at stake, yet in matters of so high import as the diffusion of human happiness, and the increase of subjects under so pure a constitution as we enjoy, we should rather have expected from the Earl of Selkirk that manly and expanded liberality which delights in forwarding the schemes of virtuous individuals, than that narrow and mercenary lesson which instructs, that he who desires a blessing must pay for it.

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The advice which is given to the gentlemen of the Highlands, who desire to preserve the population of their estates, "to replace their farms on the old footing, and to relinquish their advance of rent," is either not serious, or it is a weak and superficial observation, very unlike the character of Lord Selkirk's reasonings in general. The first part of the recommendation, it is now impossible to follow. The progress of man in mind and manners, and the progress of society towards improvement, may be impeded in their course, but they cannot be lifted a century backwards by word of command. And as to the second branch of this advice, it were altogether unjust to require the sacrifice. The price of land has gradually advanced every where else, and why should it not do so in the Highlands? We are aware, that Lord Selkirk may answer, that he does not desire it should not so advance; he only says, that good rents and abundant population are inconsistent. This we deny. Mr Brown has in various places made the union perfectly intelligible, on the data of positive facts. One passage only we shall select. "I could quote * (says he), instances in the interior Highlands, directly in the face of his Lordship's whole argument. These cases refer

* Page 19.

refer to the conduct of gentlemen, who, having stocked their mountains with sheep, without dispossessing a subtenant, and being influenced by no nonsensical ideas about clanship, invited strangers to settle upon their property, built houses for them, furnished them with land and lime or marl during a limited period. These occupiers had a portion of waste land assigned them, rent-free, during a certain period, after which the rent was to rise progressively during the existence of their tenures. Such bargains, as far as they have come to my knowledge, have uniformly proved beneficial to both parties. While the landlord laid the foundation of progressive increase of wealth to himself or family, the tenant also, by having the full advantage of his industry, soon emerged from poverty to comparative wealth, and thus added to the permanent capital of the nation."

4. *Sheep-farming, and the engrossing of small farms.*—On this head also, Mr Brown has thrown much light, by the extent of his information, and the nature of his suggestions*. To shew how little the introduction of sheep has contributed to the proper causes of emigration, in comparison with the statements of Lord Selkirk, he reminds his

* *Vide* Strictures, p. 17—34.; and 38—49.

his readers that emigration had commenced *before sheep-farming was introduced* *, at least into the North Highlands † ; that of the emigrants from the country to the north and west of the track of the Caledonian Canal, a great part have moved *from districts which neither are, nor probably ever will be subjected to sheep-farming* ; and that from Argyleshire, where sheep-farming was first introduced, *fewer emigrations* have taken place than from other *districts, where this system has not been adopted*. These are strong facts. They are better than a whole host of speculations.

After all, however, it must be acknowledged that the increase of sheep may tend to the decrease of people, if ever the former be introduced over cultivable territory. But this has not, and never can happen in the Highlands, at least to any extent worthy of notice. The improvement of the low grounds by farmers and crofters, is already ascertained by experience to be the most advantageous plan for all parties ; and if the proprietors were less awake to their own interest than they are, the natural state of the country, presenting a motely aspect of mountain, glen, marsh and shore, would of itself prevent that universal subjection of its surface

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* Strictures, p. 36.

† Page 38.

to the woolly tribe, which could operate to the serious injury of the proper measure of population. There is room enough in the Highlands for the fisherman, the grazier, the manufacturer, and the cultivator of the soil, as well as for Lord Selkirk's favourites, the "shepherd and his dog." In fact, it is men and not sheep which are now wanted. The immense quantity of waste land, and the delay to open communications between district and district, clearly prove, that an increase of the human race is there chiefly required. On this head, and in demonstration that the notion of an existing superabundance of population, requiring the help of an artificial vent, is erroneous, we find in Mr Brown's pamphlet the most pointed and convincing statements. Within forty years * it has happened, as he informs, to one individual parish of the Long Island, that the population has increased from ten families to 900 souls, by the influx of settlers, and the recovery of waste land. In the course of a few years, Mr Hume of Harris has raised his rent-roll from L. 895 to L. 4000, by "letting his farms to a body of small tenants †." And similar changes have been effected on the properties of Clanronald, Boisdale, Barra ‡, &c. &c. Nor is it alleged, that these improvements are nearly arrived at their summit,

* Page 31.

† Page 45.

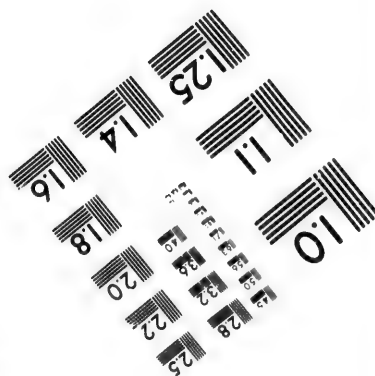
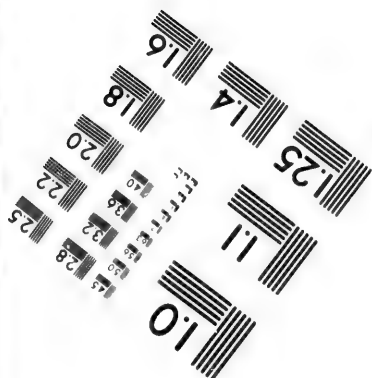
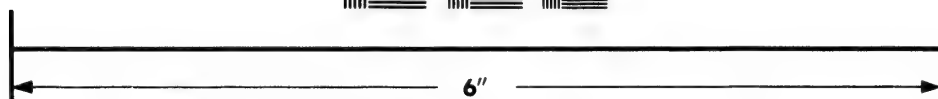
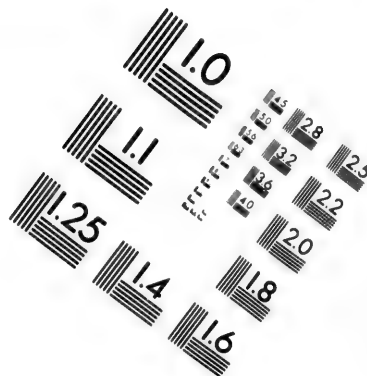
‡ Page 47.

summit. "It will require an increased population, and a length of time, to effect the necessary improvement. The people therefore have no occasion to cross the Atlantic to cultivate waste land, because they can be furnished with abundance of employment in this way at home." Such, then, independently of the claims of the fisheries, and of the kelp, of the army, of the navy, and of our manufactures, is the situation of the wants of the Highlands and Isles of Scotland.

As to the engrossing of farms, that, like the accumulation of sheep, may in some instances prevail beyond the due measure, or may accommodate the local circumstances of a few places. In the general, however, the natural character of a Highland country must likewise oppose the excessive progress of this evil. The minute division of farms has indeed been attributed by Lord Selkirk solely to the influence of the feudal state*. There were other causes, however, of this mode of division in the Highlands, which existed before the feudal system arose, and some of which will continue to exist when the records of that system have for long been swept into oblivion. The natural face of the country is, as has been mentioned, one obvious and insuperable bar to that enlargement of farms, which is frequent in a champaign country; and this

* Page 102.





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this obstacle, while it bids a powerful defiance to the spirit of engrossment, seems to teach, that it was the accommodation, not the avarice of man, for which a mountainous country was designed by Providence. Besides, the extension of tillage, even under an engrosser, cannot be accomplished without a numerous population. In Essex, or in Berwickshire, the most extensive farmer can easily conduct the routine of his annual operations by means of a limited number of hands. With him, the greatest part of the labour,—the original cultivation,—has long been overcome. But in the mere infancy of improvements, the labour is both difficult and uncertain. It requires the aid of many workmen ; and after it is accomplished, the increase of the cultivated surface, and the produce of additional food, are circumstances evidently favourable, not inimical, to population, even under the drawback of occasional enlargement of farms, and under the mistaken idea that there were no other peculiar occupations for mankind in highland and insular districts, of which the fruits can minister both to their own support, and to their country's aggrandizement.

That sheep-farming, and the enlargement of small possessions have operated to the unbounded encouragement of emigration, is nevertheless an opinion so generally received in the Low Country, that

that it scarcely appears to be enough, to deny the supposed extent of their effects, even on the authority of the facts which have been stated. Very candid men may naturally enough inquire, To what, then, do you attribute the rage of emigration? Causeless to move is quite unnatural.—We cannot better answer this question, than by referring our readers again to Mr Brown*, who has enumerated, in succession, the true causes from which this spirit arose, and by which it has been fostered; all of which were temporary, and many of which have already ceased. These were chiefly, a combination of the tacksmen on a particular estate, to obstruct the measures of their landlord; a rivalry in interest among the cadets of another family; a series of religious disputes between the Protestants and Catholics; the labours of itinerant preachers, fanatics and levellers; and, above all, the efforts of emigrant agents, trafficking in the regular business of transportation. To these causes, coupled with a certain portion of dissatisfaction, consequent on the abolition of the old system, and a certain portion of that spirit of enterprise which is more or less universal among mankind, Mr Brown has justly ascribed the rise and continuance of Highland emigration.

5. *Scarcity*

* Page 36—40.

5. *Scarcity of Fuel.*—On this article, as a supposed efficient cause of emigration, it is unnecessary to dwell a moment. It would fall more properly to be viewed as an impediment to the progress of the arts and manufactures; and even in that view, it strikes us as having been pressed, not regularly insisted, into the service of the Earl of Selkirk. The facilities of the Highlands for the importation of fuel, are notoriously superior to the facilities of the great proportion of the northern, and even southern Lowlands of Scotland; and the almost generally profusion of peat and turf, for the immediate accommodation of the people in the common purposes of life, though not an equivalent substitute for coal, is at least sufficient to negative the opinion, that the inhabitants are driven away by want of firing, or that strangers are any wise deterred from coming, by the apprehension of its scarcity.

6. *National Character.*—*Natural Disposition and Habits of the People.*—Whatever may be the fictitious habits of these people, their latent abilities, to an extent sufficient for ordinary purposes, are acknowledged by Lord Selkirk himself. The difference, therefore, between his Lordship and his opponents, lies in the expediency of their several schemes, for calling forth these abilities. He
reckons

reckons, that transportation, (not the punishment, the *blessing* of transportation), is the best plan, and consequently affords an apology for, if not a cause of, emigration. We, on the other hand, should humbly conceive, that there are means of much greater efficacy at home. It is always something in our favour, that both parties concur in the admission, that the Highlander *may* be made to exert himself. No doubt, Lord Selkirk does say, that to bring him to a life of regular and persevering industry, requires "the stimulus of absolute necessity *;" and, to do his Lordship justice, there will speedily be no want (if our information be correct), of that stimulus, in the island of Prince Edward's. But still the capability of exertion, under any excitement, is always one point gained for our argument. Let us, then, in a single paragraph, inquire, How that capability happened so long to lie dormant; or, if it appeared at all, chanced to shew itself only by starts?

There was a time, when the only objects of the northern landlords, being the splendor of a train of followers, or the assistance of a body of soldiers, the habits of the people were suffered to dwindle into indolence and idleness, whenever these objects were served for the time. That period, however,

* Page 103.

ever, is no more. The dosing Highlander of the seventeenth century, has, for a generation or two, been changing into the industrious husbandman or fisher. The scale of his industry may indeed be limited; but it does not the less, on that account, promote his contentment. There is a point of moderation in human wishes, as distant from the extreme of sloth and indolence, as from the extreme of cupidity and inordinate desire. And it is universally declared by those who know the Highlands intimately, that, guided by this temperance of spirit, the class of small farmers properly so called, of all others, exhibits the least disposition to emigrate; which clearly proves what is the mode of occupancy most suitable to their genius and circumstances.

With men of this character, who are not *very* active by habit, whose attachments rest on moderate enjoyments, their natural dispositions would rather betray the reverse of the conclusion which Lord Seikirk has drawn, than furnish an appendix to his catalogue of the causes of Highland emigration. The exertions, which the mere act of emigration require, and the difficulties which the most sanguine and credulous adventurer must foresee to be in waiting for his reception in the new land, and
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which difficulties, they know, must be surmounted; are evidently repellents, not attractives, to the genius of a quiet and moderate people. A lazy and slothful race may be reconciled to the *gradual* imposition of almost any domestic burden, but it is very difficult to conceive that such men are likely to display a greater, in preference to a less, violence of effort. On his own principles, therefore, Lord Selkirk seems to fail in this instance. If the Highlanders are to be considered as sluggish or listless, whence is it that they so frequently rouse to the most vigorous effort of which human nature is capable, the effort of separation from their country for ever? To men, who love their native land, (and who can deny that Highlanders feel that attachment?) the horrors of an endless separation exceed every possible idea of common legal punishment. Compulsatory transportation to *Prince of Wales's* Island for a term, will not present half the woes of necessary transportation to Prince Edward's for life. The exile is not half so hopeless in the first case, nor is the effort of course half so violent as in the second. If, again, these people are not to be viewed as of an indolent disposition, then does the conclusion founded on this hypothesis fall to the ground. The truth, however, in this case as in most

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others,

others, lies between extremes; and the author of the preceding Letters is still of the opinion which he formerly submitted to the public on the origin and the nature of the Highland indolence * ; an indolence, which the manners of former times, the moderation of the people's desires, and the ease with which, in those regions, those moderate desires were satisfied, naturally occasioned ; an indolence, which the gradual introduction of better habits, the imposition of equal rents, and the visible improvements of many of the tenants in wealth and independence, will speedily cure. And admitting, that the character and ancient habits of the last generation may have tended towards the spirit of emigration, by its tendency to foment dissatisfaction, on the introduction of a new system, it does not follow that the same cause operates now to the extent which the Earl of Selkirk supposes, any more than that if it did, the amendments suggested by his Lordship are best calculated, either to remove the evil, or to enlarge the mass of human happiness. For the people, he prescribes severe and unremitting labour, in a foreign clime ; for their country, he projects a more scanty population. The medicine in the first case is unnatural, and

* *Vide* Letter VI.

and has accordingly hitherto proved unsalubrious. The advantages of the second plan are in opposition to many of the doctrines of theorists, and (in such a country as Britain), to all the experience of ages.

Such, then, are the *causes* of emigration, noticed by Lord Selkirk ; some of them ideal ; all of them overrated. From the general candour of his Lordship's mind, we had unquestionably expected to find the admission of another cause ; the influence of seductive accounts of the advantages of American settlements, and of the labours of those who are interested in the dispersion of such representations. But the operation of this cause is so much scorned by the Noble Lord *, that of *his* proselytism we have no hopes. The good sense of the public may possibly incline *them* to listen to evidence ; and we refer them, with confidence, to the reports of the Highland Society ; to travellers of respectability ; to the resident gentlemen ; to the clergy ; to common sense ; and to Lord Selkirk's own proceedings, in support of our affirmation, that in sober truth emigration has owed its principal success to the seductions which, most unfairly, but most assiduously, interested men have employed for interested purposes. The reports of
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the Highland Society, referred to in Lord Selkirk's book, have settled this point, if it had ever been disputable. It is true, indeed, his Lordship objects to their evidence : * " They have given their opinion (says he) not in the character of a judge, but as a party in the cause, as representing one class of men, for whom they appear as advocates at the bar of the public." With great deference to the authority of Lord Selkirk, we rather think that this objection to the voice of so respectable a body, partakes more of the professional dexterity of a lawyer feed to start every exception, than of the liberality of the philanthropist, who feels himself called forth " to plead a too long neglected †" and a national cause.

Neither was this objection to have been foreseen in another view. The impartiality which is refused to the Society, may perhaps in some measure be justly denied to them ; but is Lord Selkirk quite sure that it has found its way, in perfect purity, into his own breast ? After having embarked a capital in American speculation ; after having done his best to people his transatlantic estate from the Highlands and isles of Scotland ; after having heard a general outcry against his proceedings, his Lordship finds it expedient

* Page 162. † Page 162.

pedient to fit down and compose an eloquent vindication of his measures, full of the speculations which he has formed. That his opinions are sincerely entertained, we freely acknowledge; but is it not obvious, that in their formation, he has incurred the very charge which he would now transfer to the reporters of the Highland Society?

To return, however, to the effects which the seductive efforts of the friends of emigration have occasioned,—we might appeal to the testimony of the very facts stated by Lord Selkirk himself*. Even *he* found it necessary to give “more than ordinary advantages” to those whom he persuaded to join him; “to extend his offers of encouragement as far as he could, without a total disregard to his own interest:” even he found, that he had to deal with men who required to be “induced to deviate from their own plans,” &c. &c. And, though these admissions are coupled with declarations, that he had “no wish to increase the general spirit of emigration,” and that the people whom he thus persuaded to follow him, were persons whose previous “views were directed towards the United States;” the plain sense and the truth of the whole matter is, that bribes and seductions were used, and being used, could not possibly

* Page 184.

possibly be confined to any particular class or description of persons. Cautious as the Earl himself may have been, his emissaries could not be expected to be very nice in their operations. Recruits were wanted ; and it was all one to Lord Selkirk's agents who they got, if only the lists were filled. The violence of discontent, once kindled by the arguments and the temptations of a venal herd, it was not to be expected that the same men who raised, would be anxious to purify, and still less to quench the flame. Nor does the matter rest here. We have another fact to press against the noble Lord's proceedings, and their influence, which strikes at the root of his whole argument and plan together.

In the foregoing letters, credit has been given to the Noble Lord for the purity, and, in a certain measure, for the propriety of his motives, in endeavouring to change the destination of the emigrants ; to attract men who were pre-resolved to go, by leading them to our own colonies, in place of suffering them to follow out their predilection for the territory of the American Republic. This object, an object certainly laudable, if managed with caution, was distinctly professed in his Lordship's introduction, and in his 11th and 12th chapters. It now appears, however, that in all this there is a
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capital error *. Mr Brown has given to the world a variety of facts, from which it is established, that ever since the American war, the Highlanders in general have *avoided* the territory of the United States, evincing the most determined predilection for the British settlements. If these facts be susceptible of contradiction, Lord Selkirk is undoubtedly bound to contradict them. If no contradiction appear, we are entitled to suspect, that the zeal of the Right Honourable Friend of Emigration, has, at the least, been misdirected. If, “out of twenty-five vessels that sailed with emigrants in 1801,–2, and the early part of 1803, only *one*, or at the most *two*, sailed for the United States †;” if indeed “his Lordship and his agents were more assiduous and successful in procuring emigrants, in those districts which had never sent colonies to the United States, than in others;” and if, moreover, many of those who signed his subscription paper, only did so from “supposing the place where they were going, to be near to the other British settlements; “what are we to think” (to use the words of the intelligent writer referred to), “of his claim to merit for *changing* the current of emigration, or
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* Page 4. &c.

† Strictures, p. 9, 10.

of the disinterested sacrifices he has made *to induce* the people to go to the British settlements?"

The conclusion is, either that Mr Brown has deliberately misrepresented facts which he could not but know, or that the Earl of Selkirk has permitted an unbridled enthusiasm to hurry an upright and capricious mind into errors, which more temperate investigation would have explored, and which genuine patriotism would have rejected.

II. In the outset of these imperfect remarks, it was premised, that according to the doctrines of Lord Selkirk, the *consequences* of Highland emigration were domestic benefit, by the removal of an idle, superfluous and discontented race, and colonial advantage, by the accession of an active, orderly, and industrious people.

The contradiction into which this twofold theory has led the Noble Author, is obvious to many of his most impassioned admirers. But its self-opposition is not its only objection; the assertions on which it is reared are inaccurate. The emigrants are not naturally the idle nor the discontented people they have been represented. They are willing to labour; they are useful at home; and they are an orderly and a peaceful people. Of these propositions, the two first have in some measure

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sure been shewn in the foregoing pages. As to the last, we must be permitted to observe, that it is neither very generous nor very politic thus to represent the Highlanders as a discontented set. Whatever local and temporary ferments, local and temporary causes may heretofore have excited, no people under the sun have ever displayed more remarkable instances of obedience to the laws, and of internal concord. They have patiently submitted to mortifying and odious privations. They have frequently and cheerfully undertaken duties, foreign to their ordinary habits. To the stranger, a hearty and complacent welcome is with them ever ready. From the moment of the abolition of the feudal jurisdictions, they have lived in uninterrupted obedience to government; without the superintendence of a military control, and (what may surprise an Englishman) in many places without the presence of a magistrate, or even a constable, throughout an extensive district. Can these people merit the appellation of a discontented or disorderly race? On the contrary, they know that the situation of man is the preceptor of his duty; and they have almost uniformly acted up to that knowledge.

Emigration is not necessarily the proof of discontent, unless where the spirit is general through-

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out the country which is the seat of the supposed unhappiness, and where there are no other exciting causes. If this spirit be urged and fomented by temptations, and bribes, and seductive allurements, it does not get fair play. A man, who is first intoxicated, then deceived, and thereafter persuaded, does not act according either to reason or to conviction. Beside all these considerations, it is impossible to believe Lord Selkirk's representations of the condition and prevalence of Highland discontent, when they colour the supposed discontent to a height which would exhibit that state of excess, which total extirpation alone could cure. He talks of them as "a people infected with the deep and permanent seeds of every angry passion*." He represents the poison of dissatisfaction as so firmly seated that it will probably "pass from generation to generation," and disturb the peace of our posterity. If all this be true, the dispensation is awful. There is no temporising with any part of the present race of Highlanders; the very child, at its mother's breast, will suck in the first principles of the hereditary malady.

But we need not be alarmed. There is no such discontent existing in the Highlands of Scotland.

Its

* Page 125—129.

Its residence is confined to the fancy and imagination of individuals. Peace, and industry, and happiness, follow every hour in the train of national prosperity, if American traders would either let the people alone, or take more pains to invigorate their understandings, than to inflame their minds. So says Mr Brown, and so say many others. Indeed, Lord Selkirk's own conduct gives ample contradiction to his statements. For how can we reconcile that conduct with these assurances, when we see him struggling to secure for his own estate, the very men whom he believes to be the "infected of every angry passion?" How credit the baneful hereditary dispositions of those, who, while they were dangerous to the peace of their native land, are nevertheless an acceptable treasure to the Earl of Selkirk, the colonist?

Disposed as we are to reprehend these unguarded accusations, we hope, for humanity's sake, that the Noble Lord will hereafter find his people better subjects, and happier men than he gives himself reason to expect. Were we, however, at liberty to prophesy, we should predict something near to the reverse of the picture which his Lordship has drawn,—*future* discontent and anarchy among men, whose severest pang will hereafter be the comparison

comparison of the present with the past. The rich fancy of Goldsmith has imagined the very case :

Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,
To traverse climes beyond the western main ;
Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,
And Niagara stuns with thundering sound :
Where beasts with man divided empire claim,
And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim :—
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
To stop, too fearful, and too faint to go :
Casts a fond look where England's glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.

Touching these “consequences” of emigration, the Noble Author has been at great pains to convince his readers, that the Highlands are actually over-peopled ; and he was right : without a redundant population, there can be no sort of excuse for removal. If the observations which we have obtruded, are well founded, however, it would seem, that the population of the Highlands and Isles is defective, not redundant, in proportion to the capabilities of the country. Scotland contained, indeed, fewer people a century ago than it does at this hour, notwithstanding all it has yet suffered by emigration ; but it evidently contains fewer now than it did before, *in proportion*

tion to the means of their support. And, if this be true, the result is, that, by the continued progress of agricultural improvements, the more extended use of the potato, the advance of the fisheries, and the introduction of manufactures, an increasing population may be preserved, without resorting to artificial drains;—without the aid of Lord Selkirk's plan of emigration, on the one hand, or of the Chinese scheme of infanticide, on the other.

When the period shall arrive, that the Highlands are in that state of agricultural and pastoral perfection, that no additional labour can increase the means of subsistence, then indeed population may require an outlet. But the boldest imagination can hardly stretch to that era, when in the Highlands of Scotland, there will be no longer a subject on which to operate, and no longer a fund or store for the maintenance of increase. At present, every thing is in its infancy but the feelings of national attachment; and it will be soon enough to provide for the superabundance of other fruits of prosperity, when their cup is seen to overflow.

Another of the consequences of emigration can never pass from the minds of reflecting men; the probable fate of the poor adventurers themselves. Whatever fancy may have painted, or interested

men

men have misrepresented to Lord Selkirk, the public have only to inquire at the proper sources of information, to discover, that, in general, the fate of the British emigrants has heretofore been calamitous. Poverty, nakedness, dispersion, hunger, disease, servitude, disappointment, hopeless banishment, have been their bitter portion. Hundreds of respectable authorities might be produced to confront those who pretend to give an opposite account. And what reason have we to expect a different fortune to the recruits for Prince Edward's Island? Even Mr Malthus, the most able of all the race of theorists, and the author to whom (if the coincidence have not been very curious), Lord Selkirk is indebted for a large portion of his speculations,—even *he* admits, that “in the accounts which we have of the peopling of new countries, the dangers, difficulties and hardships with which the first settlers have had to struggle, appear to be *even greater than we can well imagine they could be exposed to in their parent state* *.” And he follows up this assertion with a catalogue of melancholy and affecting instances of utter and desolating failure, that make one's blood run cold to think of, and furnish an ample lesson of caution to mankind. One of the causes of this general “*fati infelicitas*”

* Vol ii. p. 135.

infelicitas" of emigration, may well be given from the text of Mr Malthus himself: "One of the reasons why we have seen so many fruitless attempts, at an immense public and private expence by several of the powers of Europe, is, *that the moral and mechanical habits adapted to the mother country, are frequently not so to the new-settled one, and to external events, many of which are unforeseen.* *'" But we shall not pursue this subject. Every reader's mind will suggest to himself the risk attendant on such enterprises; enterprises which commence with a separation that "snaps those cords which nature has wound in close and intricate folds round the human heart," and which, if we can repose any confidence in experience, must terminate in disappointment and misery, however much the liberality of an individual may, in his particular case, for a while strive to avert the evil day.

There is one circumstance in the probable doom of the emigrants, which appears to us in a very affecting light; the loss of the opportunity of that regular and systematical discharge of religious duties to which they were from infancy habituated in their own country. We hope there is no class of readers so cold as to treat this consideration

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* Page 140.

with indifference, far less so unthinking, as to turn from it with derision. Independently of deeper views, the mere recollection that the undoubted bent of the Highlander's mind is uniformly turned towards piety; that religion is one great source of all his happiness;—should lead his countrymen to lament a fate, which in all probability, must for ever deprive him of the indulgence of regular ceremonial worship, and, what is better, of the advantages of pure and genuine instruction. For, in America, how is this to be secured to him? How, indeed, is *any thing* there to be secured? What is to give stability to property, to liberty, to inheritance, to life itself? And if the influence and auspices of Lord Selkirk were equal to the assurance of every perfect and requisite civil and religious institution, (though we must own we do not discover either, included in his Lordship's catalogue of colonial requisites), how are such establishments to be supported, protected, superintended and perpetuated, when the transient rays of his high influence are departed, to shine no more?

The "missionary" aids will hardly do. These people may contain some upright, though enthusiastic minds among them; but, in general, they have not
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proved very friendly to sound morality, and still less friendly to good government. At best, they furnish precarious aid ; at best, they are fanatical, capricious and uncontrolled. Nor can Lord Selkirk assure himself, for one week, of their coadjunction, even such as it is. Yet, with all these drawbacks, he does not scruple to undertake responsibility for the happiness, in every view, of thousands.

How wise would it then be, to rescue so great a number of loyal, brave, and meritorious subjects from a perilous destiny ; and, if they must be transplanted, to settle them under the wings of our own government, on our own shores ; if they must be transferred, to place them with their gallant brethren in the Highland brigades of the army, in the navy, or in the service of the nation, in works of national improvement ? Hitherto America (to use the beautiful expression of a late orator), has scarce ever known what it is "to see the grey head" of an emigrant. Cargo has been exported on cargo ; but the ordinary consequence to these Highlanders hitherto has been, a hopeless series of vexations and distress : nothing of that brilliancy of success ; nothing of that general prosperity which alone can compensate to one state for sub-

jects lost, or from another, for a population acquired.

III. *The measures of prevention* which have been suggested, in reference both to the passion and practice of Highland emigration, are various. Lord Selkirk has noticed the following.

1st, Improvement of waste lands.—The vast proportion of uncultivated territory which Scotland contains, is scarcely credible to a native, and would altogether surprise a stranger. Gradually to reduce these wastes to culture, or even to ameliorate the herbage of the pastures, is matter of obvious national expediency. Without hands, however, it is in vain to expect improvement. Even with the aid of many hands, there are obstructions to vanquish; but the primary and *sine qua non* requisite, is an abundant population. It was long since well said, (by Dean Swift, if we mistake not), that he who made two blades of grass to grow, where only one grew before, was indeed a benefactor to his country. And we may surely pronounce, that he, by whose exertions a single acre of waste is reclaimed for the use of man, is a still greater friend to society.

In general, throughout the Highlands, calcareous manures are in great plenty; in general, the inhabitants

inhabitants are willing to improve; in general, the proprietors are liberal in their encouragement. On the other hand, it is true, bad roads, the quantity of marsh and bog, the frequency of rock, and the comparative poverty of the people, oppose considerable obstacles to the advance of improvements. But even these drawbacks are not insurmountable, if men are supplied, especially whenever any share of the public aid is extended, for the construction of roads, canals, bridges, and such like. Compared, too, with American obstacles, these difficulties sink into a shadow. A climate unpropitious to Hebridian constitutions, the severe labours of the woodman, of which the Highlander has never formed a conception, the want of every adventitious aid, either for the preservation or recovery of health, or for the mechanical reduction of his daily toils, the necessity of possessing some capital, (which the greater part of the emigrants either have not, or have expended on their outfit and voyage), and the inferiority of American to British *returns from land*,—a fact which is now perfectly ascertained; all these things demonstrate the superior expediency of speculating on British rather than on American wastes. British land, moreover, may get better and better, and if fairly treated,

treated, will never become worse ; whereas, it is generally understood, that the soil of America declines in its fertility after a few years, under the very best management. It is clear, therefore, that in the Scottish Highlands, the sources of acquisition are not dried up. We are not forced to look upon the unrecruiting prospect of poverty, sterility and desolation. Give but justice to nature and genius, and with the increase of individual wealth, the general stock of the community may be augmented. The husbandman, the fisher, and the manufacturer, may indeed have to pay a tax, or an interest for their profits, but the profits will still be sure.

In addition to these considerations, we must not forget, that great success has uniformly attended the labours of those individuals who have hitherto directed their attention to this branch of productive industry. Lord Selkirk candidly admits this* ; and various proofs of it are stated by Mr Brown. Into this channel, also, the natural disposition of the people for small possessions may be turned with peculiar advantage, and the instance of Mr Macdonald of Staffa, particularly quoted by Mr Brown †, of itself proves how well the interests of the public, and of the individual, may be here united ;

* Page 95, &c.

† Page 71.

united ; and how genuine is the patriotism of this gentleman, whose various efforts have been directed to teach his people the benefits of industry and the means of happiness, without teaching them the wisdom of leaving their native country.

2d. Manufactures ; Kelp.—After the most mature reconsideration, we continue of opinion, that the introduction of manufactures would afford one valuable resource against the dangers of an overflowing population. The woollen trade, in particular, presents a natural and easy mean of employing a vast body of people, in scattered and moderate establishments. The raw material is at their doors. The detail of the manufacture is simple, and particularly suited to the genius of the people. The manufacture, also, of linen, in a country whereof the soil and climate are well adapted to the growth of flax ; of hemp into cordage ; of iron into nails, and the more ordinary implements of husbandry and domestic accommodation ; of leather into its various uses ; the business of bleaching, of dyeing, and a great variety of other works, might all be introduced on a moderate scale, with great apparent success. There is no want of water for every purpose ; there is pretty generally a ready supply of turf, and there are
thousands

thousands of inlets for coal on all points of these indented coasts. In short, the scheme of Highland manufactures, just promises as fair as it did in most situations in the Lowlands, before the experiment was tried.

The great objection of the Noble Earl seems to be *, that a Highland manufactory, if established, must necessarily occupy the place of one which would of itself have grown up elsewhere in more favourable circumstances. We cannot subscribe to this idea, which would arrest the radical spirit of all improvement. We acknowledge, with the Noble Author, that, in an abstract point of view, manufacturing enterprises are, and must be, “limited to the extent of the market.” But we deny, that the “extent of market” has any other limit but the acmè and perfection of the commercial prosperity of the whole civilized world. Looking around us, we see variety of manufacturing undertakings, most prosperous and successful, of which the primary commencement was at least as unpropitious as similar attempts in the Highlands could be; yet till now we never heard it objected, that these establishments were calculated to supplant, not to augment, other parts of the stock of national industry.

Under

* Page 112.

Under this head of manufactures, the article of *kelp* may be noticed, as one considerable mean of the employment of a great part of the population. It has of late years become an article of much importance to the public as well as to individuals; it produces a large and a growing revenue; and we are assured, on all hands, that it can only be worked to advantage by persons who have been early habituated to the difficulties of the labour.

Lord Selkirk's objections to the kelp, as opposed to the necessity of emigration, are, that the season of working is short*; that in the kelp districts, land is made a subordinate consideration; that it would be wiser to let the lands at their full value, and to hire kelp-makers from other corners; and that the great proprietors, in endeavouring to preserve a crowded population on their kelp shores, are acting on misguided impressions, raised by mercenary individuals; by the lesser heritors, the principal tacksmen, and the land-stewards. To all these objections, the answers are easy and obvious. From the precarious, disagreeable, and even perilous nature of the kelp-work, it is certain, that no other than the present race would undergo

* Page 135.

dergo its hardships. It requires a crowd of hands to catch the opportunity of securing the floating and drifting weed, which, if not obtained on the instant, is lost entirely. These necessary hands could not be found at a call, to the amount of hundreds for each estate, even if proprietors were disposed to pay them the highest wages; and if such men were to be found, the profits of the manufacture could not afford such remuneration as would defray the expence of bringing and returning them to the low country, and of tempting them besides. Further; It has uniformly been found, that, in proportion as population increases, so does the quantity of kelp, owing to the nature of the vegetable, and the progressive improvements in cutting and managing it; and, what is more, it has also been found, that, so far from the land adjacent to the kelp shores being anywise sacrificed to the service of the kelp-makers, the tenants in these districts are enabled, and are in use, to pay a greater price for the lands they rent, than such land would fetch under any other circumstances*. “Had the Earl of Selkirk a sufficient opportunity of knowing the *fact*, he would learn, that kelp farms are frequently let to small tenants considerably above their intrinsic value. This being the case, his arguments

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* Strictures, page 97.

may amuse; but will never convince, the proprietors of those parts of the Highlands and Isles, where kelp is an article of profit, that they are under the influence of an erroneous policy.

In regard to the supposed vices of the smaller heritors, tacksmen, and factors, in imposing on the credulity of the great landholders, that is a subject which falls not directly within the scope of our object, which is to hint at the more obvious evils, and suggest the more general correctives of depopulation. But to those who wish to see the cause of the gentry and others vindicated from the charge of Lord Selkirk, we humbly recommend the apparently unanswerable explanations of Mr Brown*.

3. *Fisheries*.—It was at one period our intention to have entered at some length into the nature and detail of this extensive source of national prosperity, and to have pressed, in the most earnest language we could command, its importance as a cure for emigration, on the attention of our readers. Recollecting, however, that the public are in possession of several very valuable tracts on the subject, and understanding, besides, that a gentleman of great local information, and of talents, is likely to

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* *Vide* Strictures p. 86. &c.

favour the world with the result of his experience and reflection, it is enough for us to hail the promised work, and to beseech every friend to his country, to let no unseemly prejudice, no ungenerous apathy prevent his best consideration of a subject, which, in some measure, involves the preservation of the splendour of the British name.

By the extension of these fisheries, Lord Selkirk concedes, that “a neat and absolute addition may be made to the production of national wealth, and a new supply is procured of human subsistence, which would otherwise be lost*.” In the possibility of this extension, even to an extent that is indefinite, all other writers concur. Instead of these fisheries being *at present* brought to perfection; instead of their being incapable of affording employment to many additional hands, as Lord Selkirk in another place would insinuate, “It is a certain fact, that were the salt regulations so framed, that this necessary article might be procured free of all duty and restraint of every kind, colonies of Dutchmen, and even of Americans, with large capitals, have expressed a desire to settle in the West Highlands, and to prosecute the fisheries.†” A confirmation

* Page. III.

† Strictures, p. 76.

mation of these facts will be found, if we are not mistaken, in a printed letter addressed by Robert Frazer, Esq; in the year 1803, to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and in another letter of much (though in some points mistaken) force of eloquence, written by the learned Dr Anderson, and annexed as an appendix to Mr Frazer's pamphlet.

Without presuming to enter into the detail of a discussion, which has been, and is about to be treated, with greater knowledge and ability, let us just remind our readers, that the north-western coast and isles offer to their people, from the fisheries, the means of subsistence, employment and wealth; that they present a maritime frontier of great extent, and of inexhaustible resources; that they supply, besides, a vast nursery for those seamen who are to constitute the force of that bulwark, on which, if not our existence as an independent nation, at least our influence as a powerful empire, for certain depends.

The population of Holland is in a great measure supported by the very fisheries which we neglect. The population of the Highlands of Scotland is nevertheless to be weakened, if Lord Selkirk prevail; while every traveller, every investigator, and almost every writer exclaims, that were a careful

ful examination to be made of our coasts, not only would new sources of wealth arise in the discovery of new fishing-grounds, to an extent almost unlimited, but situations would be found admirably fitted for the formation of towns and villages, as well as for the stationing of fleets, in protection of the empire and its trade.

For regions, therefore, in extent, amounting to a sixth part of the territory of Great Britain; for regions at present doomed to the punishment of depopulation, we would proclaim the improvement of the fisheries, as of itself a perfect mean of salvation. Against this opinion, Lord Selkirk has little to prefer. He doubts the *extent*, indeed, to which this national object may be carried. He is afraid of an overstocked and surfeited market. In short, in his monitory reasonings, he exhibits all that timidity, apprehension and suspicion, which emanate from his speculations in every direction of domestic improvement, but which have no admission into his visions of transatlantic good, and never chequer his ideal course of the benefits of Highland emigration. It is time enough to entertain alarm when there is an ascertained cause for it; time enough to stop in the career of home improvement, when the mine of wealth is really

really worked to the bottom, or the mart of disposal visibly and experimentally glutted. Hitherto that has not happened ; even the Earl of Selkirk does not affect to say so. As yet there is room, by the medium of the fisheries, to stop both the necessity and the desire of emigration ; in other words, to prove that the evil is not incorrigible. By the adoption of a few judicious regulations, it is admitted by all mankind, that the fisheries might to some extent be improved ; and by the same easy means, it has been demonstrated by a variety of able men, that these fisheries might be created into a source both of maintenance and revenue of incalculable amount. We do not, however, ask the public to decide on our anonymous opinions. We do not bid them rest either on the cold and scanty admissions of the Earl of Selkirk, nor on the sanguine and fervid expectations of every other writer. We appeal to their obligations as Britons ; to their attachments as fellow-subjects ; to their justice as men, and call upon them to investigate and inform themselves ; to reflect on this important topic of universal concern to ourselves and to unborn millions ; and when they are convinced, to bestir themselves before it be too late, to oppose that noxious spirit of which

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Lord Selkirk is the champion, and by diverting the pursuits of their inexperienced brethren into channels of private wealth and public aggrandizement, to stay a torrent, which, if allowed to roll on, must, ere long, destroy the means whereby national advantages can alone be obtained.

One word only, touching the salt-laws ; the duties, or regulations concerning which, all persons admit to have an oppressive operation. At present, the duties collected on this article of human support, in the Highland districts, do not defray the expence of the collection ; of course the loss of those duties would be no injury to the public. At present, the regulations concerning its importation, by the process of customhouse inspection, the execution and cancelling of the bonds, and the risks and inconveniencies which both importers and purchasers are obliged to run, render this article almost inaccessible to the poorer fishers, and a grievous burden to all ; of consequence, a change of system must be for the advantage of the Highlanders. “ The salt-laws (observes Dr Anderson) are the real cause of the distress under which these countries have so long groaned ; nor can any thing else than a total repeal of these laws ever mitigate, far less entirely remove those evils.”

evils." In Guernsey, Jersey, and Man, we understand that the greatest advantages have resulted from the exemption of the inhabitants from this grinding impost,—an impost evidently at absolute war with the extension of the fisheries; and why the same indulgence should be withheld from the Highlands and Isles of Scotland, has never yet been shewn. If the Legislature were supine, its constituents might rouse its energies, by those appeals to its wisdom which would doubtless be heard. If the subject were of no importance to the general weal, individuals might be expected to pursue the means of their own emolument. But living under a Government, in whose Crown the brightest gem is its invaried disposition to anticipate the people's wants, and pressing for a boon which is calculated to promote the advantage of the State, as much as the profit of individuals, we cannot but trust that the time is not remote, when *every* measure will be tried, that either intelligence or experience can suggest, as likely to forward the increase of the fisheries; in other words, to secure the preservation of our naval strength, the augmentation of the means of human subsistence; the full employment of the population of the country, and the utter decay of Highland emigration.

4. *Public Works.*—On this article, it does not appear necessary to add any thing, even to the brief observations in the Letters. There are some things too plain for argument. Under this description, the string of indisputable propositions relative to those improvements in the Highlands which belong to the class of Public Works, really and truly appears, in our humble conceptions, to fall. Works that are executed by Highlanders, must give employment to Highlanders ; wages earned, must give bread ; the visible disposition of Government to supply the loss of the ancient patriarchal protection of the Chieftains, by a far wiser, more liberal, and more consolidated aid, must cherish and secure the attachment of a warm-hearted people ; above all, the effect of these public works, when achieved, must tend to the internal melioration of the country, by an accumulation of all those facilities, which, in every other quarter of the globe, have been the first and the best means of civilization and of wealth.

5. *Restrictive Regulations.*—Lord Selkirk has displayed an especial anxiety to resist the very appearance of compulsory measures ; to censure every idea of retaining subjects against their will ; to repress the slightest notion of persecution. “ If
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there exist" (observes his Lordship *, speaking of the late emigrations), " among the Highlanders, any wanton discontent and restlessness, nothing seems so likely to keep alive and extend this spirit, as the attempt to restrain it by individual persecution. Every manly heart will revolt at such means, employed to restrain the exercise of an acknowledged natural right ; and the indignation which every act of oppression must excite, may actually impel those to emigration, who otherwise would never have thought of it."

Had these sentiments been really called for by any of the steps which have hitherto been adopted, or any argument which, as far as we can learn, has ever yet been advanced, the propriety of their introduction into his Lordship's book would have been obvious. A moral and well-regulated liberty is the proud inheritance of every subject of these realms. From the highest to the lowest citizen, (excepting only a particular set of artificers), every man has a right, not only to enjoy the fruits of his industry, but to choose the place of his residence, within or without the boundaries of the kingdom. He has a title to come and go at pleasure ; and so long as he encroaches not on the

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established rights of others, his privilege of self-government is perfect. Of course, the foregoing propositions of the Noble Earl are indisputable. At the same time, we cannot discover either the occasion or the prudence of their promulgation, in the work before us. Mankind are but too apt to take fire at the most distant hint of an invasion of their natural rights ; and there are many on whom even a publication, merely declaratory of the existence of those rights, will carry the suspicion that they are actually in danger.

Now, we deny that any such conclusion has been justified, either by the measures of the Highland Society, or the recommendations of individuals. That legislative interference has been sought and obtained, in order to *regulate the exportation* of the emigrants, is true ; but does this infer an encroachment on natural liberty ? Had an armed force been marshalled around our coasts, and the bayonet been pointed at the breast of the emigrant ; or had a law passed, declaring it felony to migrate to America, then, to be sure, the hue and cry of " liberty wounded " might have been raised, as loud as ever was the howl of sacrilege in the most turbulent days of fanaticism. But when the utmost measure of legislative interference has only
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been to correct that dangerous negligence of the exportation-traders, by which disease and death on the very passage were added to the long list of the calamities which befall the emigrants, the present implied charge of encroachment on the natural rights of man, occupies that place which would have been better filled with a tribute of applause to benevolence.

Civil liberty does not consist in the uncontrolled and unadvised power of following out every inconsiderate or mistaken inclination. As it is the duty and privilege of a parent, to direct and admonish his family, so it is the duty and privilege of a Legislature to provide against the rashness and incaution of her people. The same title which authorized the State to adopt regulations of humanity for the welfare of the *black slaves* imported to the West Indies from Africa, justifies the establishment of similar precautions for the safety of the *white freemen* exported from the Hebrides to America. Such laws, if they are to be termed "restrictive," at least partake somewhat more of the kindness of the protector, than of the lath of the executioner. Prior to these regulations, humanity and justice in the conduct of the process of emigration, were superseded by rapacity

rapacity and avarice ; now, these passions are subjected to the control of a decent regard to the lives of human beings. This is the sum and substance of the evil, which has awakened the fears of Lord Selkirk ; this is that dread encroachment on the rights of men, which has provoked his animadversion. Yet all this, and more, seems to be perfectly consistent with that true and rational liberty, which is only enjoyed when it is restrained, and which, without some regulation, would degenerate into wild and horrible anarchy. Were it, therefore, true, that regulations of some force had been imposed on the means of Highland emigration, we should still have ventured to answer, that a free government, established on the basis of natural right and general happiness, is nowise tarnished by the exercise of the checks which lead to ultimate good ; that a free people are most secure when their abstract rights are encircled by the controlling hand of moderate power.

“ Hail sacred polity, by freedom reared !

Hail sacred freedom, *when by law restrained !*

Without you what were men ? A grovelling herd,

In darkness, wretchedness, and want enchained.

Sublimed by you, the Greek and Roman reign'd

In arts unrivalled : Oh, to latest days,

In Albion, may your influence, unprophaned,
 To godlike worth the generous bosom raise,
 And prompt the sage's lore, and fire the poet's lays."

It is indeed matter of no ordinary surprise, to find such a mind as Lord Selkirk's squeamish, and apprehensive of the propriety of any laws for which his brethren of the Highland Society are capable of pressing, or which the British Legislature is likely to pass, for interrupting the means of emigration. It almost reminds us of the labours of an author, (much noticed by Mr Malthus), Godwin, who, in his fallacious book on Political Justice, strives to persuade mankind to throw off the bonds of civil regulation, because, as he contends, the whole vices in society arise from human institutions. To political regulations, and to the administration of property, this ardent, but artful writer, ascribes every crime by which mankind is degraded. Every evil with him is of human institution; every good to be obtained only by the abrogation of those coercive regulations that form the bonds by which states and governments are upheld. Nothing is allowed to the laws of nature, or to the imperfections of humanity,—to the indispensable mixture of virtues and of fail-
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ings. Such fanciful representations may exhibit rhetorical skill, or the splendour of imagination, but they are not of the school of sound philosophy. The real condition of human nature and social life, is not fit to endure absolute freedom and self-will. The great inequality of talents, and the empire of the passions, demand institutions of protection; and protection implies control. Restrictive laws, and penal bills, therefore, are as necessary for man, as are regulations directly protective; although it may happen that both the one and the other may be misapplied. In the words of Mr Burke, "Abstractly speaking, government, as well as liberty, is good; *circumstances* give to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind." Let it not, then, be objected to the proceedings taken, or to be taken, in relation to the emigrants, that they are in some shape restrictive. Let it first be inquired, whether their object is hostile to humanity, or inconsistent with the principles of good government; and by that object let them be judged. The medium through which happiness is to be circulated among thousands of valuable and
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innocent men; the medium through which a system of error, disappointment, infelicity, and in short, of *Highland emigration*, is to be corrected, ought not, perhaps, to be very curiously scanned. But when, nevertheless, it can bear even the investigation of jealous inquiry, and stand its ground, it ought not to be discarded, because the reins have been given to genuine benevolence.

This much we have thought it our duty to say, in regard to the late emigration-act, of which Lord Selkirk appears to us to have written, in one or two places*, without ever consulting the feelings of his own heart. The single object of this statute was, to ensure to the emigrant a safe and comfortable passage, by removing the miseries attendant on a long voyage, in vessels whereof the cargo was human creatures, and under the management of those who were professed traffickers in flesh and blood. It was to regulate the transportation in such way as might be least destructive to human lives. The individual regulations adopted were borrowed chiefly from the laws respecting the Slave Trade; and the advantages sought for our countrymen, and complained of by the Earl of Selkirk, are almost the *verbatim* provisions, which legislative beneficence

* *Vide* p. 150—152.

neficence has secured for the Negroes imported from the Guinea coast. This is a fact beyond the reach of contradiction ; although it may be equally beyond the reach of ordinary comprehension in one or two particulars, which the Noble Lord will easily discover.

Instead of obstructing the views of *voluntary* exiles, the late act has really facilitated their object, by the reduction of exorbitant profits formerly taken by the traders, and by augmenting the comforts of the voyage. We have inquired into this matter, and find, that even the freight of an emigrant has not been raised above forty shillings since the date of the bill ; and for this trifling addition, the passenger has medical assistance, and abundant provision during the voyage, and security given to be landed at the place he prefers, notwithstanding the rise on every article of life, the advance of insurance, and the increase of seamen's wages, since that period. To see Lord Selkirk, therefore, with these facts before his eyes, pouring forth anathemas against the wisdom and justice of the emigrant bill, is one of those rare and inexplicable deviations from the common order of human sentiments, that the bulk of mankind will be disposed to rank among the eccentricities

eccentricities of genius, that are far more to be lamented than approved.

Neither has this emigrant act impeded the industry even of the speculators. At this very moment, various ship-loads of emigrants are preparing to sail for Prince Edward's! The fact is notorious and open. Indeed, Mr Brown gives a distinct report of the whole business*; the bargain with the American landlord; the sub-engagements of the inferior parties; the contract for the passage, &c. &c. The superintendence of this embarkation is entrusted to a Jew of the name of Rabbi; the member of a tribe which is not peculiarly distinguished in the annals of bad bargain-making. This Hebrew coadjutor of the Earl of Selkirk, is even now publicly employed in the exportation of the inhabitants of the ill-fated districts to which we have alluded; those districts whose coasts the Noble Lord imagines to be guarded by restrictive regulations, adverse to the departure of the people. Nothing can present a more fatal proof that Lord Selkirk is mistaken, if he really supposes contrary to his own experience, that there are any restraints existing, sufficient to stay the progress of emigration. For ourselves, with every attachment to the cause of liberty, we say, Would to God there *were*

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* Page 99.

something of the kind ; something discovered, at least, which might instruct Mr Rabbi, the Jew, and all the vermin which surround him, that they had mistaken the colour of their merchandise ; or, if that be a lost hope, something which might set on foot those restrictions which the conviction of a whole people has sometimes imposed on themselves ; which wisdom and experience sometimes raise in the breasts of individuals for self-protection.

Finally, on this article, we must observe, there is a difference in point of fact between Lord Selkirk and Mr Brown, which ought, for the sake of justice, to receive the widest possible circulation. Both these opposite authorities cannot be right ; and, as Lord Selkirk receives a flat denial, he is bound to justify, or to correct his statement. We think it best to give the words of his Lordship's contradictor. " Lord Selkirk states, That the Highland proprietors used all their influence, and even applied to Parliament for legislative interference, to prevent their people from leaving them. Now, I boldly aver, that this statement is in direct opposition to the fact. The Highland proprietors used no influence ; they did not apply for any legislative interference ; they left the people to the freedom of their own will, and the only interference

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rence they shewed, was, a disposition to provide settlements on their property for persons who seemed qualified to promote their mutual advantage *.”

Having thus presumed to offer these additional detached remarks on the causes, consequences and correctives of Highland emigration, as enumerated by the Earl of Selkirk; the Author of the “Eight Letters” shall, once more, leave the more ample discussion of this great question to abler pens, whose aid he earnestly solicits; to those, who, by uniting local knowledge with talents, can decorate and illustrate the homely circumstances of substantial fact. His object, as already stated, has been nothing but to awaken the Public to an investigation of doctrines full of danger, and a scrutiny of assertions occasionally of suspicion. He is very far from affecting to have answered Lord Selkirk’s book; though he cannot renounce the expectation, that he has in some small degree assisted to stem that tide of implicit confidence, which for a time followed in his Lordship’s train, and to bespeak an impartial hearing for a body of helpless fellow-subjects, from those, whose

consequence,

* Strictures, p. 60. Lord Selkirk, p. 88—94.

consequence, power, and authority can administer to their relief.

That these brief and cursory remarks have to encounter all that disregard which generally befall, and frequently are merited by, anonymous statements, he is aware. Nor is he less aware of the opposition which issues from the perennial springs of interest and prepossession, when authors of much less eminence than Lord Selkirk are assailed. But with all these disadvantages, and all their inability to encounter the eloquence, and labour, and long preparation, which have secured celebrity to the finished work which they were intended, not surely to cope with, but unquestionably to resist; the Letters of *Amicus* are again delivered to a publisher, in the words of an author who wrote on an occasion perhaps of less importance to his country: "I find a consolation, (said he), that respectable works on the same subject are expected by the public. Too many minds cannot be employed on a controversy so immense as to present the most various aspects to different understandings, and so important, *that the more correct statement of one fact, or the more successful illustration of one argument, would rescue a whole volume from the imputation of having been written in vain.*"

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